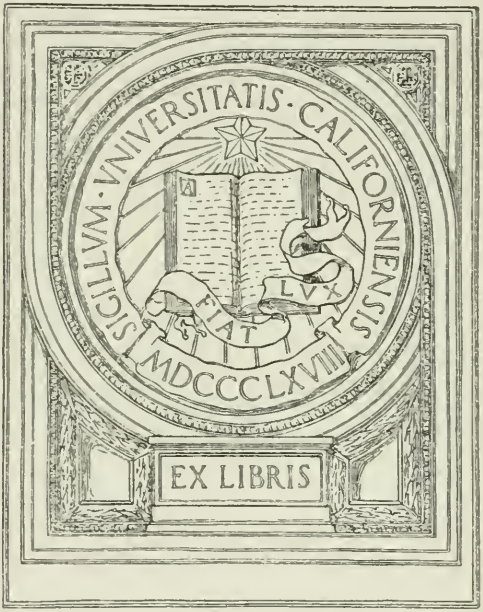
William Winter

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



THE WALLET OF TIME

VOLUME ONE

This Edition is Limited to
Twelve Hundred and Fifty Copies

"These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air."

—The Tempest.

THE WALLET OF TIME

CONTAINING PERSONAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, AND CRITICAL REMINISCENCE OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE

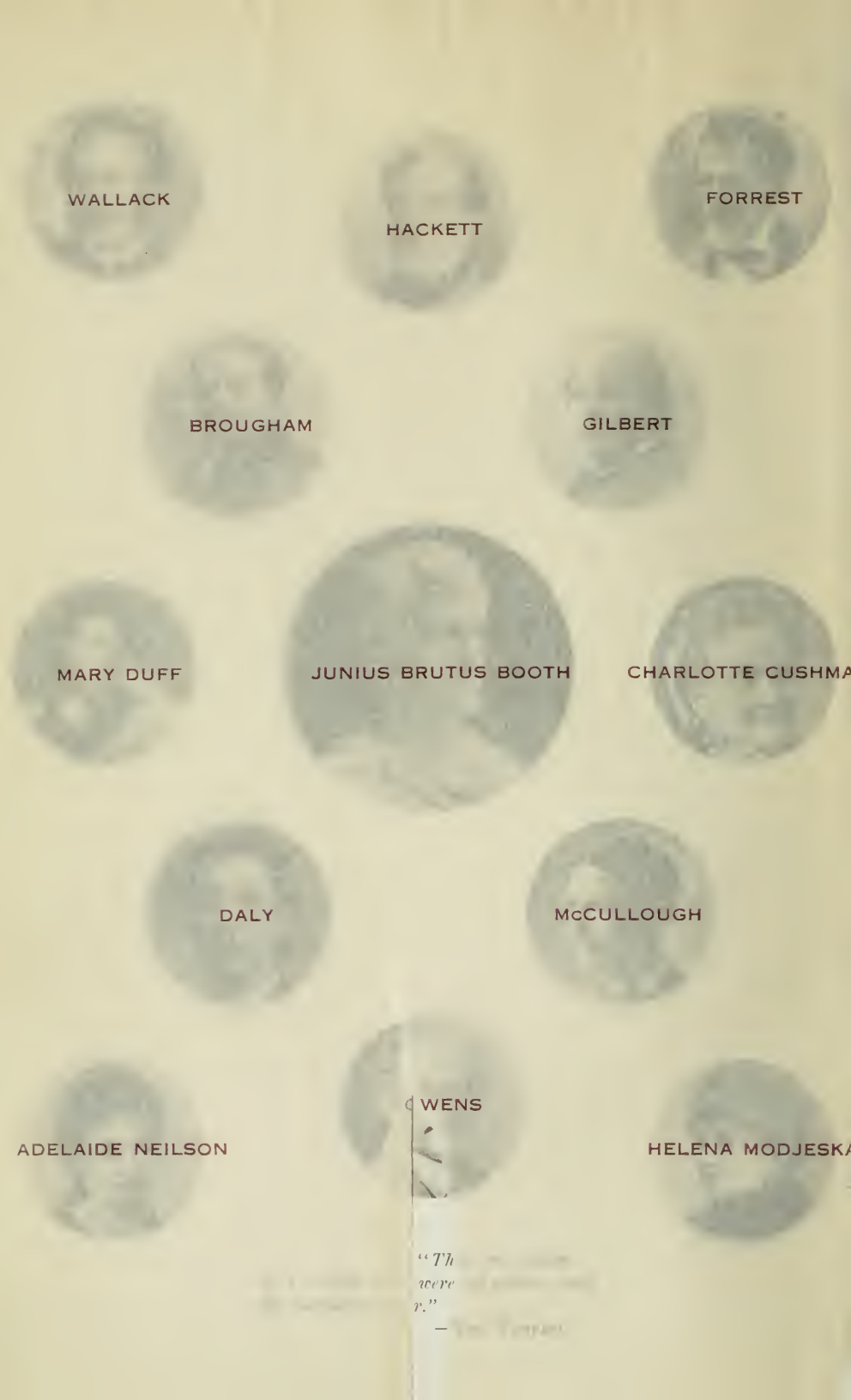
BY

WILLIAM WINTER

"I shall prophesy he comes to tell me of the Players: mark it."

—SHAKESPEARE

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1913


WALLACK
HACKETT
FORREST
BROUGHAM
GILBERT
MARY DUFF
JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH
CHARLOTTE CUSHMA
DALY
McCULLOUGH
WENS
ADELAIDE NEILSON
HELENA MODJESKA

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1913

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Published, September, 1913

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To

JOHN RANKEN TOWSE

Remembering His Distinguished Services to Society
During Many Years of Conscientious Labor
As Journalist and Dramatic Critic
And Honoring His Dignity of Character
Rectitude of Purpose and Devotion to Duty
I DEDICATE
This Commentary on the American Stage

Not in mere praise, but that a rightful pride
May, from the heart, an honest tribute send,
I write these words,—which, haply, will abide,—
To homage Virtue and to vaunt a Friend.

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PREFACE

It occurred to me early in life that a comprehensive and minute History of the Theatre in America, showing the action and reaction of Society and the Stage and making the great actors live again, could be made a work of peculiar interest and value, and I entertained the purpose of writing it: but I soon perceived that such a History could be prepared and published only by a person possessed not only of the necessary knowledge and enthusiasm but of ample wealth and leisure, and my ambitious purpose was abandoned. I have, however, ventured to believe that my various writings about the Stage might be made usefully contributive to the general store of theatrical information. There are persons, considerable in number, to whom writings about the Theatre seem superfluous, but when it is considered that an immense space is devoted to such writings in almost every non-technical publication of the day, and that such writings are welcomed with eager interest by millions of readers, the conclusion is irresistible that a deep and general interest exists in that institution. Thoughtful contributions to theatrical history and commentary, therefore, should not be deemed worthless.

This work offers a comprehensive glance at dramatic affairs in America within the period of about the last sixty years. During the greater part of that period I have been continuously employed as a dramatic critic in the service of the press, seeing

thousands of theatrical performances and knowing hundreds of actors. I was a follower of the Stage in boyhood, began writing about it in youth, and have been writing about it ever since. My observation of it, which was begun in Boston, was continued in New York, and has ranged through many cities, in the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, and France. My writings have been published in various periodicals. In the course of this long experience of play-going and of studious and diligent commentary on plays and players I have accumulated a vast store of theatrical records, in print and manuscript, and in composing this work I have drawn upon that material,—namely, my scattered writings in THE NEW YORK ALBION, THE NEW YORK WEEKLY REVIEW, THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE, HARPER'S WEEKLY, *and other periodicals; three books of mine, called* SHADOWS OF THE STAGE, *long out of print and inaccessible; my personal journals, and my privately printed chronicles. Having written* LIVES *of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, and Richard Mansfield, and having in preparation a book about Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, I have not included in the present work any special reference to those famous players. Indeed, this work, extensive as it is, makes no pretense to being exhaustive. Many volumes would be required for the biography and critical commemoration of all the actors of conspicuous merit or, for one reason or another, of notable importance, who have passed across the stage within the last sixty years. The present work,—supplementing others from the same pen, and itself to be supplemented,—is devoted to consideration of players selected as representative of various styles of Acting and, in the growth, eminence, and decline of their popularity, illustrative of the*

mutations of public taste. Many names will be missed, in the reading of these pages, which are as well entitled to consideration as many that are herein mentioned: William Warren, accomplished, versatile, artistic, supreme equally in pathos and humor; Lester Wallack, leading representative of Light Comedy; William Evans Burton, the Momus of his day, and much more than a satirist; William Pleater Davidge, excellent low comedian; Barney Williams and his beautiful wife, exponents of Irish Drama; Matilda Heron, erratic, impressive exemplar of Celtic emotion; George Fawcett Rowe, latest and best of the stage interpreters of Dickens; George L. Fox, Prince of Pantomime; the Wallacks (Henry, Fanny, and James William, the Younger), the Elder Jefferson, the Fishers, Thornes, Drews, and Mestayers; Fanny Kemble, Julia Dean, Eliza Logan, Mrs. Farren and their compeers, a galaxy of talent and beauty; Otis Skinner, native to romance and delightful in it; William and Madge Kendall, typical representatives of finished dramatic art; George Honey and Edward Terry, eccentric comedians of superb ability; Maurice Barrymore, able, wayward, early and sadly lost; the sparkling Grace George, the piquant Hilda Spong, and others of that vivacious strain; Edwin Adams, Frank Mayo, and Wilton Lackaye, admirable in the realms of poetic heroism and manly adventure; the distinctive tragedian, Robert Bruce Mantell; those auspicious actors Tyrone Power and William Faversham; and the notable managers from Dunlap, Caldwell, Gilfert, Sol Smith, and John T. Ford to Daniel Frohman and David Belasco. To those and others I hope to do justice in a sequel to this compendium.

In assembling the material of this work I have sought to estimate the motives, achievements, and rank of dominant actors, managers, and dramatists whose artistic expression has been influential in my time, and to designate those methods of theatrical administration which are best calculated to promote the welfare of the Theatre by making it entirely and rightly serviceable to Society. Subjects, accordingly, have incidentally been discussed which are not directly relative to the lives and doings of actors. Criticism of the Stage involves criticism of human nature and human life. Not all movement in our Theatre has been progressive and not all enterprise has been beneficent. A note of censure, therefore, sometimes necessarily makes itself audible. The frequent incursion of actors from the continent of Europe, speaking foreign languages and sometimes exhibiting inferior methods of art, rightly exacts attentive consideration, and occasionally,—because an irrational pretension of incomparable excellence is often made in their behalf,—compels judicious protest. Administration of the business of the American Theatre, in recent years, has been characterized by a policy of covetous, despotic, sordid commercialism, which ought to be rebuked and steadily opposed. Approximate monopoly has been established, and competition, except between rival branches of oppressive combination, has been made almost impossible. The control of, practically, all the first-class theatres in the United States has become, directly or indirectly, vested in the hands of a few speculators. Those persons are sometimes vigilant, energetic, and shrewd in business affairs, but they view the Theatre, and they manage it, as a shop, —and nothing more. The sycophants of that Theatrical Monop-

oly, despotic in its conduct and actively pernicious in its influence, can pleasantly and profitably indulge in adulation of an evil power: the historian of the Theatre is obligated to tell the truth.

In the course of a long life of almost incessant labor as a dramatic critic, while I have not lacked favor and support, for which I am profoundly grateful, I have sometimes aroused enmity and encountered not only opposition but abuse. It will not, accordingly, be deemed improper that, in drawing a part of my testamentary judgments into what I hope will prove an enduring form, I should here refer to certain principles of criticism and indicate my attitude toward the condemnation of my critical writings which has been elicited, at various times, from various censors. Ethical principles are more important than artistic principles. The whole experience of my life sustains the conviction that, while the dramatic artist, whether author or actor, should never undertake directly to inculcate a moral, it is the first duty of the critic to ascertain and declare the moral influence consequent on dramatic expression. There is no doctrine more prevalent to-day, relative to dramatic representations, than the doctrine which declares that a dramatic critic should concern himself exclusively with the dramatic aspect of a theatrical performance,—the elements of dramatic effect and the technical method by which actors either utilize or neglect their theatrical opportunities,—and there is no doctrine more false and foolish. Theatrical criticism should be written for the information and guidance of lay readers, not for the instruction of professional actors. The art of the actor no less than that of the dramatist

is a proper object of critical examination, but the critic who is restricted to technicalities becomes practically useless,—or worse than useless. Few writers on the Drama have shown competence to instruct even an experienced "utility" actor, as to the Art of Acting. The dramatic critic should appreciate method and style in both dramatist and actor, but, first of all, he is necessitated to employ an ethical test. The rightful object of all endeavor is the benefit of all persons. The field of the dramatic critic is as broad as human experience and as deep as the human heart, and the value of what he writes will ever be proportionate to its relevancy to the moral, intellectual, and spiritual influence of the Drama on the development and progress of civilization.

Those are the fundamental principles which have actuated me in the endeavor to fulfil a delicate and difficult task. I believe them to be sound; yet I have been publicly apprized that I do not rightly comprehend the province of Dramatic Art or the Function of Dramatic Criticism; that I am "an idolater of the Past" and "a reactionary"; that I "see no good in anything," and "possess only a lyrical faculty in praise"; that as a man I am "dishonest" and "ignorant" and as a writer "prejudiced," "brutal," and "unjust." That liberal allowance of disapprobation, signifying dissent from my criticism and hostility to my influence, has neither disturbed my composure nor hampered my industry. It is neither possible nor desirable to please everybody, and there are persons whose approval would be a disgrace and whose enmity is an honor. Examination of the censure to which I refer has enabled me to discover that the "injustice" imputed to my critical opinions consists in the fact that they are dissen-

taneous to those of many other writers (all of whom, of course, are always wise and just), and that the "brutality" of them consists in the vigor of their expression; in short, that they are my independent "personal judgments," expressed in terms of positive conviction, and therefore reprehensively indicative of a writer who is "very sure of himself."

It would be contemptible affectation on the part of any writer possessed of knowledge, experience, conviction, and trained literary faculty to pretend diffidence in writing on a subject which he is equipped and competent to treat. It is erroneous to suppose that "everything is a matter of opinion." There are many things, in Art as well as in Nature, which are matters of fact, and they remain matters of fact, notwithstanding all diversities of opinion. I believe that, in matters of art, it is essential for all judges to respect "those rules of old discovered, not devised," and I am not able to comprehend why the opinions of other writers should be sought or expected to occur in writings of mine. No rational person would study Gibbon in order to ascertain the views of Dr. Priestly and Dr. Watson. My judgments may or may not be right, but, such as they are, they are mine; they proceed from close and anxious observation, solicitous for truth. The reasons for them are fully and clearly stated, and no intelligent reader can be misled or perplexed by them.

It has been urged as a reason why my criticism should be invalidated that I have been, and in some instances still am, the personal friend of actors about whom I have written. That is true. I have been blessed by the affectionate friendship of some of the noblest men and women who have graced the Stage, and

for that blessing I am profoundly grateful. I can say, with Churchill,

> *"I've had some friends e'en Envy must commend,*
> *But not one foe that I would wish a friend!"*

And I should despise myself if I supposed my moral sense and intellectual faculties were so poor that I could not form an untrammelled and just estimate of any actor who happened to be my friend. "Judgment," said Dr. Johnson, "is independent of the will." Persons who believe that the sentiment of friendship could ever lead me to bear false witness are welcome to subsist in that mean delusion. All the circumstances of a theatrical venture should be considered by the critic, in determining alike the time and the purpose of his verdict. I have no sympathy with that singular ideal of impartiality in human conduct which enjoins that you must never stand by a friend and never serve anybody except an enemy or a stranger.

As my personal feelings have not influenced my praise, neither have they prompted my censure. It is easy to condemn. It is difficult, and, as a rule, more salutary, to commend,—in an intelligent manner. But certain subjects, which must be treated if our theatrical history is to be written, can be treated in only one way. The story of the life of Edwin Forrest, for example, cannot be excluded from the record of the American Theatre, and it cannot be truly told without some censure. In the face of wayward innovation and groundless and sometimes impudent pretence, the plea for truth, reason, and simplicity is not less essential than appropriate. It is no fault of mine that administration of

the American Theatre, of late years, has often been tyrannical and wicked; nor that some actors and managers from whom high endeavor might reasonably have been expected have disgraced the Stage and themselves by unseemly exhibitions; nor that, instead of being dominated by great and good men and supreme actors, like Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, or Henry Irving, it is, to-day, throughout the United States, subservient to the nod of an illiterate bully and deferential to the views of a theatrical janitor, who, speaking of his theatre, boasts that he keeps "a Department Store."

Consideration of the character of the subjects presented in the Theatre has, in every instance, determined the method of my treatment of them. In this book consideration has been given to some noxious subjects, the responsibility for which rests on the persons who have obtruded them. The unavoidable duty of a writer whose special field is the Theatre is to discuss the subjects which are there presented for discussion. The theatrical movement in America can no more be intelligently described without specific reference to some unpleasant or disgusting themes than the history of Spain could be written without reference to the atrocities of the Catholic Inquisition.

The occasional iteration of doctrine occurrent in this work was intended, in the enforcement of ideas which I believe ought to prevail, in the use of dramatic art, for the benefit equally of the Theatre and the Public. Those ideas relate to the inflexible domination of moral influence in the Drama,—suggestive, not didactic; the dominance of personality in the artist over technical proficiency in the art; the indispensable presence of Evil, as con-

trasted and conflictive with Good, in dramatic composition; the paramount duty of every artist to respect morality, decency, and beauty, in the Selection of subjects to be shown; and the presumption, sometimes amounting to insolence, of theatrical writers and performers who set themselves up to be physiological monitors and sociological instructors of mankind. Some iteration of comment on those points will, perhaps, prove salutary, in a period when the legitimate drama is contending for its existence against all manner of fads and follies, sustained by reckless cupidity and entrenched within a monopolistic ring. It is my belief that there is not a derogate influence in the American Theatre which cannot be swept from it, if Dramatic Criticism, especially that published in the daily press, is invariably intellectual, untrammelled by cowardly expediency, and decisively antagonistic to every form of injustice in theatrical management, immorality in theatrical productions, and, in particular, the noxious exudations which for some time have been flowing to the Stage from the diseased brains of more or less ingenious degenerates of Europe.

A ruling purpose of my criticism has been, is, and while I continue to write, always will be, to oppose, denounce, and endeavor to defeat the policy which, in unscrupulous greed of gain, makes or allows the Theatre to become an instrument to vitiate public taste and corrupt public morals. That purpose is an important part of the design of this work,—a design which, comprehensively stated, is to biographize representative players, recent or contemporary; to commemorate interesting theatrical personalities; to celebrate fine and influential achievements on the Stage; to

indicate the continuous process of change in the character of dramatic entertainment and the public taste; to advocate the right use of a power manifestly greater in modern society than it ever was before in the history of civilization; to oppose fads; to augment the authentic chronicle of the Theatre in America; and, if possible, to exert a beneficial influence on the mind of the rising generation,—the generation that will support the Drama, determine its spirit, and shape its desiny.

In dismissing THE WALLET OF TIME *I would here gratefully express my sense of obligation to my son, Mr. Jefferson Winter, who has assisted me in every way, and without whose practical and cheering encouragement and thoughtful, candid, and stimulating criticism this work would not have been accomplished.*

W. W.

NEW BRIGHTON, STATEN ISLAND,

September 15, 1912.

"Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-siz'd monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devour'd
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done: perséverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honor bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take th' instant way;
For honor travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep, then, the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue: if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For Time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps-in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating Time.
One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin,—
That all, with one consent, praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust, that is a little gilt,
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted."

—SHAKESPEARE.

I.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM.

ITS FUNCTION AND PRACTICE.

Criticism is neither hostility nor scorn. Just condemnation of much, in the Theatre, which has been and is accepted by the Public does not proceed from impulse to deride popular fancies and propensities, but from earnest conviction and deep desire that the taste of the people should be cultivated and refined and that they should have, and should enjoy, the best that can be provided in the dramatic art. The poet Pope declared, as the final conclusion of his thought on the universal scheme, that "whatever is, is right." The playful cynic in Robertson's felicitous comedy of "Ours" announces the obverse doctrine that "whatever is, is wrong." Each of those declarations has been, and continues to be, invested with literary authority. By some writers, apparently intent on stimulating public vanity, the people are informed, in effect, that they are only a little lower than the angels and that everything of which they approve is necessarily good. By others they are assured of their intrinsic and remediless incapacity to appreciate fine things or to exercise

authentic judgment. The truth, as usual, lies in the medium. The writers who praise everything do not clarify the public mind or inform the public taste. To a certain extent judicious censure of popular fancies and tendencies is more salutary than any form of commendation. Society prospers, not through being flattered, but through being wisely, sympathetically, and practically admonished. Too much is said about the Rights of Man; too little about his Duties. Those writers who frankly tell the people the truth when, as often happens, the people are going wrong and doing wrong are better friends of mankind than those who, whether in the blind zeal of ignorant honesty or the cynical perversity of calculating self-interest, flatter every popular mood and extol every vagary of popular conduct.

Mankind is a brotherhood. In ancient Rome it was a saying of the aristocrats of mind and of rank, "The common people like to be deceived; deceived let them be." That saying is the essence of unscrupulous selfishness,—a selfishness that the better part of the intellectual world has outgrown. There cannot be one law for persons of superior mental endowment and another law for the rest. Knowledge avails nothing unless it be communicated. Blessings are but half-blessings if you keep them to yourself. Those persons who possess clear vision and stalwart strength of mind should endeavor to guide the multitude. The advancement

of all human beings concerns every individual. The safety of the top of the pyramid depends on the security of the base. Every true philosopher knows that it is both enlightened self-interest and altruistic sentiment to civilize and refine the masses of the people and to lead them upward, so that their minds can be opened to truth, their eyes to beauty, and their hearts to gentleness. The guidance of the people is the duty of the thinker: if he performs that duty he will sometimes speak in terms of censure, and he will make the censure positive enough to be felt and to be productive of good results.

The multitude is more interested in amusements than in labors. The observer who would comprehend and, comprehending, would modify or mould the tendency of the times must give special attention to popular amusements. It is through the regulation and guidance of those amusements that the people are most easily and directly reached and affected. Two methods of that regulation and guidance, both long in vogue, are sharply contrasted in contemporary practice,—that of universal laudation and that of rational, specific, instructive objection and remonstrance. The former largely predominates, and it has wrought evil by making bad matters worse. Within recent years, although beautiful and noble works have been shown in the Theatre, and important steps have been taken, an avalanche of trash and vulgarity has been cast upon the Stage, and

the people have accepted it and have, practically, approved it, while comparatively few voices among public censors have been raised against that flagrant abuse of the Theatre. On the contrary, the Public has been told to accept the vulgar trash, has been praised for accepting it, and has been prompted to encourage the extension of it. "We are a hard-working, nervous, tired people,"—so runs the stream of mischievous counsel,—"and we need recreation. When we go to the theatre we want to be amused. We do not want to think. Let us have something light!" Thus cajoled, and thus cajoling itself, the popular intelligence is encouraged in folly, and the average theatrical manager brings forth "Soul Kisses," "Whooping Cough Girls," "Blue Mice," and "Ladies from Lobster Square," and, as he gathers in the money of coarse and vapid fools, he complacently remarks, "I must give 'em what they want!"

The writers and the theatrical managers who reason in that way do not reason well. It was unfortunate that the custom of viewing the Stage as an "amusement" ever prevailed; for the Stage is an institution higher and finer than any amusement, and it exercises an influence on society second only to that of the Hearthstone. But, even viewing it as one of the amusements, no person has a right to degrade its character or impair its usefulness. If we overwork ourselves as a nation, let us quit that injurious and useless custom.

Half of the activity commonly called "work" consists of parade and pother. The *actual work* of the world is done silently, by the minority, and usually it does not occupy all the time or exhaust all the strength. Let us economize our energies and stop the snorting and the waste. If we are "tired" and "nervous" we surely can rest and refresh the nerves without turning the Stage into a playground for idiots and making the Theatre a hospital for victims of dyspepsia. Sick persons are in no fit condition to comprehend the Drama, and, even if they were, the Actor is not an apothecary. The time for going to the play is when you are well and refreshed and able to appreciate what you see and hear; when your mind is receptive and you are not concerned with the ills of your system. There are influences in the dramatic art which can ennoble and help you, even though they do not foster your lower instincts or elicit your empty laughter. Men and women who devote their lives to the study and practice of Acting are not frivolous mountebanks, emulous to make you laugh by cutting a caper, nor are you such a poor creature as you appear to be when you prattle about your lassitude and allege your preference for theatrical rubbish.

The managerial practice of assuming the existence of popular "wants" and especially of declaring that the people "want" triviality, banality, or depravity in the Theatre is not new. There never has been a time

in the history of the Stage when purveyors of trash were not striving to submerge it with follies and when basely sordid views of its province did not find glib advocates and ignoble ministers. Its condition, accordingly, has fluctuated, responsive to the shifting policies of its managers and to the moods and caprices of popular taste upon which it has pleased those managers to speculate and experiment. At some times it has flourished, in high repute; at other times it has languished. At this time it is by no means in a hopeless decline, but, throughout the United States, it is largely under the domain of speculative tradesmen, and it is encumbered with vacuous and vulgar trivialities, which are accepted by the multitude and which are viewed with mischievous lenience and toleration. Imperative need, therefore, exists of explicit and severe censure, as well of the public taste as of the pernicious doctrine that it is the right province and policy of thinkers, writers, and managers to follow the people instead of leading them, and that censure ought especially to be conveyed through the medium of the newspaper-press, which is the chief moulder and guide of public opinion and the principal organ of published theatrical criticism. Conscientious writers, however, who try to convey that censure through the medium of the press speedily discover that they have undertaken an exceedingly difficult task. The publication of impartial, objective criticism of the Theatre is, in fact, in many

instances, well-nigh impossible. Adverse judgment indeed is, occasionally, expressed, but the moment it gets into print the protest of irritated theatrical managers declares that it is "unsympathetic," "uncomprehensive," "destructive," "hostile," and "unjust." The managerial mind, in a word, considers that the province of criticism is approval, the unqualified commendation of everything that is shown, done, and said in the Theatre, and that every word of objection is dishonest or malicious. There may be exceptions, but the rule is that theatrical managers who pay for advertising space in newspapers consider themselves entitled to editorial favor, the control, in fact, of editorial policy. Not long ago an actress who has made herself notorious by presenting offensive plays, and who was then managing her tour in America, made public avowal of her opinion that no newspaper has the *right* to condemn any play or performance of which it has accepted a paid advertisement. About the same time a prominent firm of theatrical speculative janitors in New York, having resented the independent criticism of "The New York World," stated the same doctrine in, substantially, these words: "Your dry-goods advertisers can keep adverse criticism out of your columns; we see no reason why any unfavorable comment should be made about us, or our productions, as long as you get our advertisements." That assumption on the part of an advertiser, when allowed to prevail (as it was

not in that case, but as, in the press in general, it often is), necessarily throttles criticism and works public injury.

Vacuous, vulgarizing "amusements," as they are called, find favor with a desultory multitude, and their influence, widely diffused through the medium of an ill-conducted Theatre, is continuously and potently pernicious. The greater reason therefore exists that a conscientious writer should sturdily advocate all that is good in the Theatre and explicitly and effectively condemn all that is evil. In the fulfilment of that duty he will incur both enmity and obloquy, but, in the ultimate event, he will contribute to the improvement of the public taste and therein he will benefit society. There is no responsibility more solemn, more exacting, more imperative than that which rests on the writer who assumes the function of dramatic criticism, because in assuming that function he undertakes, with reference to a tremendous social force, to affect Public Opinion, the greatest of all the forces that conserve civilization. He should possess ample, exceptional qualifications and he should be true to high and stern principles, moral and intellectual. It is the duty of the dramatic critic to possess an intimate knowledge of the literature of the Drama; to discriminate between Declamation and Acting, between appearance and impersonation; to see the mental, moral, and spiritual aspects of the Stage, and likewise to see and allow

for the popular, expedient, mercenary side of it; to exercise due consideration for all obstacles that confront well-intended endeavor; to hold the scale true; to reach the intelligence of a great public of miscellaneous readers; to respect, as far as possible, the feelings and ambitions of actors; to praise with discretion and yet with force; to censure without undue severity, yet to denounce, explicitly, effectively, and persistently, the influences, often operant through misuse of the Stage, that would vitiate taste and morals; to think quickly and speak quickly, yet make no error; to check, oppose, and discomfit, on all occasions, the levelling spirit of sordid "commercialism" which is forever striving to degrade every high ideal and mobble it in the ruck of mediocrity; to give not alone knowledge, study, and technical skill, in the exercise of literary art, for the good of the Theatre and the Public, but, also, without reservation or pause, the best power of the mind and the deepest feeling of the heart to the celebration and embellishment of the labor of others. It should be added, as one of the lessons of experience, that when such a writer has done his duty to the best of his ability he should be able placidly to reflect that his motives will be impugned, his integrity flouted, his character traduced, and his name bemired by every filthy scribbler in the blackguard section of the press, with as little compunction as though he were " the common cry of curs."

It should be noted also that the function of the dramatic critic is sometimes abused. We are living in an age of electricity. "The affair cries haste, and speed must answer it!" Meritorious plays and able actors are sometimes unappreciated, or slighted, or altogether neglected. Some of the voluminous newspaper scribble which figures as dramatic criticism does, unquestionably, provide cause for justifiable discontent on the part of actors, managers—and, most important, readers. Mention has been made of an American ironmonger who was taken into Stratford Church to see the tomb of Shakespeare and whose friend reproached him for tapping on the chancel rail with his jackknife, whereupon he said he was bound to find out whether, in a neighborhood having very little iron, the fences were made solid or hollow, and, on being reproved for lack of reverence, he further stated that the grave of the man who wrote "Damon and Pythias" and "The Lady of Lyons" was a matter of no consequence to him. Some "dramatic criticism" appears to proceed from a kindred order of mind,—or, perhaps, from such judges as the lady who, on hearing that story, declared with vehemence that some persons have no respect even for those great plays of Shakespeare. But, on the other hand, the contemporary period is rich in its intellectual effort to recognize, honor, and celebrate the votaries of the Stage. Actors, the most sensitive of all artists,—for the obvious and sufficient reason that themselves,

and not merely their works, are on exhibition,—receive, from all critics worthy of the name, ample consideration, and, furthermore, they and their doings receive considerably more attention than is accorded to even the most important and conspicuous statesmen of the age. Neither actors nor theatrical managers have any just ground of complaint against authentic criticism of their art and their institution. In the sense in which the Literature of a nation is national property the Theatre of a nation is also national property; and it well becomes every conscientious, honorable publicist to use his pen, freely and strongly, to protect its honor, preserve its purity, and advance its welfare and righteous influence. That duty, while it exacts incessant toil and the incurrence of enmity and abuse, has its recompense; for, as years speed away and life grows bleak and lonely, it is the rightly governed Stage, with its sunshine of humor and its magic art to open the boundless realm of imagination, that lures us away from care and sorrow, from defeated ambitions, waning fortunes, and the broken idols and darkened hopes of vanished youth. Happy are the dreams it has inspired and fostered. Noble are the ideals it has imparted and nourished. Gentle, tender, and ever sacred are the friendships with which it has blessed and beautified life. Let us sternly condemn every abuse of it. Let us spare no effort to make it great and keep it pure.

II.

PAST AND PRESENT.

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF ACTING."

Among the actors who participated in the earliest representations of Shakespeare's plays, twenty-six of whom are named in the List that Heminge and Condell prefixed to the First Folio, two at least, Joseph Taylor and John Lowin, lived until nearly the time of the Restoration, Taylor dying in 1653, aged about 70, and Lowin dying in 1654, aged 83. Both, when young men, had seen Shakespeare, and, according to trusted authorities, had received instruction from him,—Taylor as *Hamlet,* of which part he was the second representative, succeeding Burbage, and Lowin as *King Henry the Eighth,* of which part he was the original performer. Lowin, in his latter years, having lingered into the drab and russet period of the Puritan ascendancy, became very poor and kept a tavern, called The Three Pigeons, at Brentford, then a village about ten miles from the heart of London, now practically a part of the great metropolis. He must have been what Tennyson has happily called "a mine of memories." He could,—and no doubt he did,—talk of the stirring

times of Essex, Drake, and Raleigh. He could remember, as an event of his boyhood, the execution of Queen Mary of Scotland, and possibly he could describe, as an eye-witness, the splendid funeral procession of Sir Philip Sidney. He could recall the death of Queen Elizabeth; the advent of Scottish James; the ruffling, brilliant, dissolute, audacious Duke of Buckingham; the impeachment and disgrace of Francis Bacon; the first productions of plays of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson; the meetings of the wits and poets at the Apollo and the Mermaid. He might have known Robert Herrick,—most melodious of the wild song-birds of that golden age. He might have been present at the burial of Edmund Spenser, in Westminster Abbey,—when the poet brothers of the author of "The Faerie Queene" cast into his grave their manuscript elegies and the pens with which those laments had been written. He had seen the burning of the old Globe Theatre. He had lived under the rule of three successive princes; had deplored the sanguinary fate of the martyr-king (the actors usually were staunch royalists); had viewed the rise of the Parliament and then the usurpation of Cromwell. It is easy to fancy the old actor sitting in his chair of state,—the monarch of his tap-room, with a flagon of beer and a pipe of tobacco,—and holding forth to his cronies on the vanished glories of the Elizabethan Stage, on the days when there were persons in existence really worthy to

be called *actors!* He could talk of Richard Burbage, the first *Hamlet;* of Armin, famous in Shakespeare's clowns and fools; of Heminge and Condell and their First Folio edition of Shakespeare,—a copy of which, possibly, he purchased, fresh from the press; of his old friend Taylor's acting of *Hamlet,* the recollection of whose performance enabled Sir William Davenant to impart to Betterton the example established by the author,—a model that has lasted to the present day; of Kempe, the original *Dogberry,* and of the exuberant, merry Richard Tarleton, after whom that comic genius had fashioned his artistic method; of Alleyne, who kept the Bear Garden and founded the College and Home at Dulwich, where they still flourish; of Gabriel Spencer, and his duel with Ben Jonson, wherein he lost his life at the hands of that burly antagonist; of Marlowe "of the mighty line," and his lamentable death—stabbed, at Deptford, by a drunken drawer, in a tavern brawl. Very rich and fine, no doubt, were that veteran actor's remembrances of "the good old times," and explicit and downright, it can be believed, was his opinion, freely communicated to the gossips of The Three Pigeons, that, in the felicitous satirical phrase of Joseph Jefferson, "all the good actors are dead!"

It was ever thus. Each successive epoch of theatrical history presents the same picturesque image of storied regret,—memory incarnated in the veteran, ruefully vaunting the vanished glories of the Past. There

has always been a time,—according to ever present Jeremiahs of criticism,—when the Stage was finer than it is now. The newspaper-press has dwelt sporadically and intermittently on the earth for more than 2,500 years,—ever since the "Acta Diurna" was published, in Rome, 691 B. C. I have not made examination of those records, but, if I were to do so, I should confidently expect to find that Marcus Horatius Flaccus Cacoëthes Scribendi took an early opportunity of apprising the Roman public that "the want has long been felt of an able, independent, high-toned, fearless journal which should advocate the best interests of the Stage and conscientiously labor for the elevation of the Drama,—the decline of which has long been observed with anxiety and painful regret." Ben Jonson, five years before the death of Shakespeare, while Burbage, Taylor, Lowin, and their fellows were in the flood-tide of success, described the period as "jig-given times"; Cibber and Macklin, surviving in the best days of Garrick, Peg Woffington, and Kitty Clive, were always praising the brighter days of Betterton, Barton Booth, and Elizabeth Barry. "Anthony Pasquin" (Williams, an inveterate blackguard, but a close observer and a prominent theatrical critic of his time, in New York as well as in London) wrote: "This [1791] is an age which blissfully receives dross for bullion and extravagance for truth." Aged play-goers of the period of John Philip Kemble, Mrs. Siddons,

and Edmund Kean were firmly persuaded that the Drama had been buried, never to rise again, with the dust of Garrick and Henderson in Westminster Abbey. In 1845 an American historian of the Stage, James Rees, of Philadelphia (who wrote under the name of "Colley Cibber"), described it as a wreck, overwhelmed by "gloom and eternal night," above which the genius of the Drama was mournfully presiding, in the likeness of an owl. The New York veteran of a recent yesterday, although his sad gaze may not have penetrated backward quite to the effulgent splendor of the old Park Theatre, sighed for Burton's Metropolitan, Mitchell's Olympic, and the luminous period of Mary Taylor and "Tom" Hamblin. The Philadelphia veteran gazed back at the golden era of the old Chestnut Street Theatre, the epoch of the tie-wigs and shoe buckles, the illustrious times of Wood and Warren, when Fennell, Cooper, Cooke, Wallack, and J. B. Booth were shining names in tragedy, and the elder Jefferson and William Twaits were great comedians, and the beautiful Anne Brunton was Queen of the Stage. The Boston veteran spoke proudly of the old Federal Theatre and the old Tremont, of Mary Duff, Julia Pelby, Charles Eaton, and Clara Fisher, and even gilded with reminiscent splendor the first days of the Boston Theatre, when Thomas Barry was the manager and Julia Bennett Barrow and Mrs. John Wood contended for the public favor. In a word, the

age that saw Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. Bowers, Rachel, Marie Seebach, Adelaide Ristori, Mrs. Mowatt, Mrs. Wheatley, Sarah Bernhardt, Matilda Heron, Fanny Janauschek, Adelaide Neilson, Helena Modjeska, Ellen Terry, Mary Anderson, Madge Kendal, Ada Rehan, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, E. L. Davenport, Joseph Jefferson, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, James E. Murdoch, Henry Irving, John Gilbert, Lester Wallack, John S. Clarke, John Hare, Charles Fisher, William Warren, and James Lewis was, comparatively, a sterile period, which should "hide its diminished head" at mention of the wonderful times that thrilled beneath the spell of Cooper and Mary Duff and learned and knew what acting was when Cooke's long forefinger pointed the way, and Dunlap bore the banner, and pretty Mrs. Marshall bewitched the father of his country, and Dowton raised the laugh, and lovely Mrs. Barrett melted the heart, and "the roses were bright by the calm Bendemeer"!

It is no part of my purpose, in striving to exhibit the dramatic movement of the time through which I have lived, to echo the ancient wail of regret for "palmy days." A student of dramatic literature and a continuous recorder of the acted drama for more than half a century, I do, indeed, sometimes feel, when musing upon what I have seen and known, that, in certain important particulars, the Stage of an earlier day

presented a more interesting and more auspicious spectacle than is presented by the Stage of this period. I would not, however, be *laudator temporis acti.* No good is accomplished, because no one is helped, by that bigoted worship of the Past which blindly or perversely depreciates the merit of the Present. On the other hand, it surely is just that the picture of the Theatre as it was and as it is should be truthfully painted, that the contrast of Then and Now should be shown, and that the reason why a veteran observer is justified in preferring some *Things that Were* before some *Things that Are* should be made plain. Within recent years the Theatre in America has been fettered by constricting and degrading circumstances unparalleled in all its previous experience.

In several of the larger cities of the United States comfort and luxury, at least in "the front of the house," have been provided to an extent unknown in former times, but there are theatres in the country which, behind the scenes, where the Actors work,—the persons, namely, who make the Theatre possible,—are not much better than hovels. I have seen many such wretchedly appointed theatres, and have received descriptions of many others of the same kind. In one town there is a theatre, known to me, in which all excepting two of the dressing-rooms are under the stage, in a cellar, sheathed with yellow pine, and that cellar can be reached only by narrow flights of steps,—practically,

ladders,—one at either side of the stage. A fire in that theatre would, inevitably, prove a holocaust of the actors who might be dressing therein. In a town of the Northwest there is a theatre,—"or was so very late," —which is built partly on piles, over the water, and the waves break beneath some of the dressing-rooms, and rats pervade the place. In a theatre in a considerable town, only a few miles from New York, the dressing-rooms are *all* underneath the stage, while through one-half of them extends a large steam-heating pipe, and there is not a window to the crypt containing them; they have not received fresh air since the theatre was built. In New York, a short distance from Broadway, there is a theatre,—now, temporarily, at least, given over to "moving pictures,"—in which many, if not all, of the dressing-rooms are, in like manner, sealed from the fresh air, and they are usually so damp that gas stoves must be used, to keep them even tolerably dry. Those rooms are accessible only by three steps downward, from a hall, or passage, which is only between three and four feet wide, while the entrance thereto, from the stage, is not more than two feet six inches wide, and close beside it is an iron ladder, or flight of steps, about fourteen or sixteen inches wide, set several inches from the wall. That passage, consequently, is not more than about *eighteen inches wide.* In case of fire, during a regular theatrical performance, it would be the only avenue of escape for a number

of persons, and, if there were a panic, it would, almost inevitably, be choked, and the men and women trapped therein would horribly perish. Theatres of that deplorable order are neither few nor difficult to find, scattered about the country, in cities large as well as small.

On the other hand, many of the newer theatres are beautiful, and in some of them care has been taken to provide, in every possible way, for the safety and comfort of actors as well as auditors. Though it may have been surpassed in pretension by some of the new theatres, the Olympic, in St. Louis, has long been admired by actors, because of its cleanliness and comfort. There are other theatres,—the Hudson, the New Amsterdam, and the Lyceum, in New York, for example,—in which conveniences are provided and in which consideration is shown for the actors as well as the public. It is pitiful, sometimes, though, to observe the surprise and gratitude with which actors speak of little conveniences which, in any other vocation than that of the Stage, would be considered a matter of course. The stage of the Belasco (formerly the Stuyvesant) Theatre is kept clean and comfortable. The walls, for a few feet above the stage, are painted dark red, and then, up to the flies, they are painted white. Padded strips of carpet are laid from proscenium to back wall, on either side of the stage and across it at the back, so that actors or artisans, when needful, can walk to and fro in silence; there are plain and

suitable chairs for the use of actors,—a provision which, until recently, was almost unknown,—and the lounging of noisy stage hands and the expectoration of tobacco juice upon the floors are prohibited. Those provisions, necessary and right, are, however, so unusual that actors observe them with astonishment and mention them with enthusiasm.

But even the modern theatres are not always as much better than the old ones as their owners would like the public to believe. The Iroquois Theatre, in Chicago, as a specimen of "fireproof" mechanical construction and of solicitous precaution relative to the public safety, has not been forgotten,—nor what happened in it. And, as to care of theatres behind the curtain, it was not very long ago that a favorite performer, Fritzi Scheff, stated that, when on tour, a dressing-room in a certain theatre had been assigned to her which had been occupied *"the week before by a performing pig and his trainer,"* and had not been cleaned.

Record, description, and consideration of *all* facts about Acting and about the Theatre, old or new, will, by judicious public opinion, be deemed, and it will be found, useful and beneficial, though certainly not acquisitive of immediate popularity. It is a fact, with regard to the Theatre as with regard to every other institution in society, that the interests of the many have, almost always, been served, against more or less public opposition, by the labor of a few. A practical

observer once wisely remarked that if you want a post to be white it will not be enough to paint it white, but you will be obliged to wash it, from time to time, and, occasionally, to repaint it. The public, certainly, will not suffer if, with respect to promoting excellence in theatrical administration and in acting, it counts "nothing done while aught remains to do."

Prodigious wealth, year after year, is poured into theatrical treasuries, and much of that wealth remains in the grasp of the allied speculators in what they call "Amusements,"—men who, in a few years, have, by methods derogatory to the profession of acting and inimical to the public welfare, advanced themselves from comparative poverty to great wealth. Mr. Marc Klaw, a New York manager,—whose statements on theatrical subjects are entitled to notice, since he is the senior partner in the most powerful theatrical firm in this country,—expressed his opinion that managing a theatre is, for the manager, like having a basket of paper money thrown through a ladder,—the manager being permitted to keep all that sticks to the rungs. The dominant theatrical managers of the United States, however, have not exhibited any ardent desire to find a more lucrative vocation. Does the heedlessly lavish public of America, —the most prodigal and least exacting in the world,— receive anything like an adequate return for all the money that it throws "through ladders" into the coffers of those enterprising tradesmen?

The actors of to-day are far more numerous than they were in any previous period. The population of America has grown enormously, and with it the number of actors. In 1800 the number of regular professional actors in America was about 150. The companies to which they belonged oscillated, by means of stage-coaches, among three or four sparsely populated towns. In 1880 there were, in the United States and Canada, about 3,500 towns in which theatrical performances were habitually given. Distributed in those towns were about 5,000 theatres. The number of managers was 365. More than 250 companies and stars were travelling through the land, and the number of professional actors was not less than 5,000. To-day (1912) there are more than 3,500 theatrical managers; there are at least 6,000 theatrical towns; and there are not fewer than 8,000 theatres. Of regular professional actors there are so many that computation of the exact number would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. In a recent season "The New York Dramatic Mirror" published a "roster" of more than 15,000 actors. That would be a small estimate of the total number at this time. In spite of the great increase in the number of actors, in the means and the ease of travel, in the luxury of some of the theatres, in monetary investment, and in strenuous enterprise, how does the standard of Acting, to-day, contrast with that prevalent in past periods? For readers who possess a long memory of the Past,

and for thoughtful students of the subject, the following tables may provide a significant answer:

TO-DAY.

The prominent actors of to-day who, on the American Stage, *represent* the best of contemporary ability and achievement are:

Robert B. Mantell,	James O'Neill,	Henry Miller,
Blanche Bates,	Viola Allen,	Mrs. Fiske,
Edward H. Sothern,	Theodore Roberts,	Tyrone Power,
Julia Marlowe,	David Warfield,	Louis Mann,
William Faversham,	William H. Crane,	Robert Hilliard,
J. E. Dodson,	N. C. Goodwin,	Russ Whytal,
John Drew,	George Arliss,	Charles Cartwright,
John Mason,	Wilton Lackaye,	H. B. Warner,
Otis Skinner,	E. M. Holland,	Rose Coghlan,
Jessie Millward,	Mrs. Leslie Carter,	Frances Starr,
Charlotte Walker,	Maude Adams,	Mabel Taliaferro,
Blanche Walsh,	Henrietta Crosman,	Olga Nethersole,
Margaret Anglin,	Maxine Elliott,	Ethel Barrymore.

Among all those players there are only seven persons,—three women and four men,—who have shown themselves to possess authentic tragic power in *any* degree; not even one of them has disclosed that imperial attribute as sustained and dominant. The best actors here named are, without exception, survivors of an earlier school,—to which there is *no* contemporary analogy,—and are those who, often against great opposition, are striving to make the Stage truly representative of Acting—and not a shop for speculators to bustle in, or a rostrum for the display of the petty personal vanity of bumptious janitors who mistake themselves for theatrical managers.

The acting of old-time actors is remembered by veteran observers. That of more modern actors is known to play-goers of a later generation. Specific description and analysis of both classes will be found in this work—and it can be supplemented by reference to copious printed recollections recorded by old actors and by many dramatic biographers.

1852-1861.

Representative actors of that period, on the American Stage, included:

James W. Wallack,
James W. Wallack, the Younger,
Lester Wallack,
Barney Williams,
Edwin Forrest,
Edwin Booth,
George W. Jamieson,
William Wheatley,
Mrs. John Drew,
Mrs. Jean Davenport Lander,
Mme. Ponisi,
George Vandenhoff,
Mrs. Farren,
John E. Owens,
Charles Fisher,
N. B. Clarke,
John Collins,
John Brougham,
Humphrey Bland,
F. B. Conway,
William Rufus Blake,
Mrs. G. H. Gilbert,
Charlotte Cushman,
William Evans Burton,
Charles Walcott,
Eliza Logan,
Henry Placide,
William Pleater Davidge,
William Warren,
John Gilbert,
George Holland, Sr.,
Charles W. Couldock,
Mrs. Barrow,
Mrs. Bowers,
Mrs. Mary Gladstane,
Emma Waller,
James E. Murdoch,
John Dyott,
Julia Dean.

1861—1871.

Edwin Forrest,
Dan Bryant,
Joseph Proctor,
J. H. Stoddart,
Charles Fisher,
John T. Raymond,
Charles W. Couldock,
Mrs. G. H. Gilbert,
John Brougham,
Charles Kean,
Edwin Booth,
F. B. Conway,
Dion Boucicault,
John E. Owens,
W. J. Florence,
John Gilbert,
Emma Waller,
James W. Wallack, the Younger,
John S. Clarke,
Henry Beckett,
Edwin Adams,
John McCullough,
Henry Placide,
James Lewis,
George Holland, Sr.,
Mme. Ponisi,
George W. Jamieson,
Frank Chanfrau,
Charles Wheatleigh,

E. L. Davenport,
James H. Hackett,
A. W. Young,
Ben. DeBar,
Daniel E. Bandmann,
Charles Barras,
Bogumil Dawison,
J. K. Mortimer,
Maggie Mitchell,
Mr. and Mrs. Ch. Walcot, Jr.,
W. R. Floyd,
Fanny Herring,
Mrs. Floyd,
Mary Wells,
Ellen Tree,
Laura Keene,
William E. Sheridan,
Mrs. Lander,
Kate Bateman,
Mrs. D. P. Bowers,
J. C. Cowper,
Fanny Morant,
Mrs. John Wood,
Lucille Western,
Charles Pope,
A. H. Davenport,
Mary Gannon,
Mrs. Florence,
Ada Cavendish,
William Holston,
Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams,
Mme. Adelaide Ristori,
Charles Dillon,
George Fawcett Rowe,
C. W. Clarke,
Frederick C. P. Robinson,
Mrs. Vernon,
Madeline Henriques,
J. B. Studley,
Joseph Jefferson,
Mrs. Sloan,
Jane Coombs.

1871—1881.

Charles Mathews,
John E. Owens,
Edwin Booth,
E. L. Davenport,
Marie Seebach,
Charles Fechter,
Clara Morris,
Fanny Janauschek,
Mrs. E. L. Davenport,
Agnes Ethel,
Fanny Davenport,
Charles Fisher,
Adelaide Neilson,
Charles H. Vandenhoff,
J. C. Williamson,
John Jack,
Lucille Western,
James E. Murdoch,
Owen Fawcett,
John L. Toole,
D. H. Harkins,
Ernesto Rossi,
John McCullough,
Sarah Bernhardt,
Sol Smith Russell,
Tommaso Salvini,
W. H. Crane,
William Creswick,
Frank Chanfrau,
Lawrence Barrett,
Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence,
Joseph Jefferson,
Mark Smith,
Frank Mayo,
John S. Clarke,
Carlotta Leclerq,
J. B. Booth, Jr.,
Sara Jewett,
Mrs. John Wood,
Steele Mackaye,
Walter Montgomery,
J. B. Polk,
H. A. Weaver,
James Lewis,
Barry Sullivan,
George Rignold,
Stuart Robson,
George Belmore,
Ada Dyas,
Mrs. Drew,
Ada Cavendish,
Helena Modjeska,
Charlotte Cushman,
Lester Wallack,
John Gilbert,
Laura Keene,
Mrs. Clara Jennings,
E. A. Sothern,
Dion Boucicault,
Charles R. Thorne,
Edwin Adams,
George Clarke,
Matilda Heron,
John Brougham,
Helen Temple,
Effie Germon,
Mrs. Bowers,
James W. Wallack, the Younger,
Mrs. Oates,
W. J. LeMoyne,
Charles Calvert,
Mrs. John Sefton,
John Parselle,
George Honey,
Milnes Levick,
Rose Coghlan,
Alice Harrison.

1881—1891.

Perhaps no other period in the history of our Stage has equalled that one in the richness and variety of excellence in acting then visible. During it were seen, many of them in the prime of their careers:

Edwin Booth,
F. F. Mackay,
George Clarke,
Osmond Tearle,
Rose Coghlan,
Fanny Davenport,
J. H. Barnes,
N. C. Goodwin,
Charles W. Couldock,
Frank Chanfrau,
E. A. Sothern,
Ada Rehan,
Mrs. Langtry,
George Edgar,
Charles Leclerq,
Jane Hading,
Ernst von Possart,
Tommaso Salvini,
Effie Ellsler,
Charles B. Handford,
Otis Skinner,
Robert B. Mantell,
Kyrle Bellew,
Henry Irving,
Mary Anderson,
Lester Wallack,
Joseph Wheelock, Jr.,
Stuart Robson,
Henry Edwards,
John Gilbert,
Edward J. Henley,
Charles Pitt,
Ernesto Rossi,
J. H. Stoddart,
Mr. and Mrs. Whiffen,
W. J. Florence,
J. E. Murdoch,
Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Kendal,
Joseph Jefferson,
Frederick Warde,
Richard Mansfield,
Marie Wainwright,
Ian Robertson,
John Drew,
E. H. Sothern,
Joseph Haworth,
Helena Modjeska,
Dion Boucicault,
Genevieve Ward,
Wilson Barrett,
W. H. Crane,
Lawrence Barrett,
William Warren,
W. J. Florence,
Clara Morris,
Adelaide Ristori,
Louis James,
Ellen Terry,
Charles Coghlan,
Charles Wyndham,
Constant Coquelin,
Ludwig Barney,
F. C. Bangs,
Lewis Morrison,
Charles Barron,
Viola Allen,
J. H. Gilmour,
Eben Plympton.

It will be observed that, in a number of instances, the same name appears in two, and sometimes three, different periods. A career, on the Stage or elsewhere, commonly is limited to about thirty years, and it is notable that many of the best contemporary actors were the rank and file of their profession, ten or twenty years ago, and in many cases were then in the vigor

of youth and enthusiasm,—acting in great plays and under great leaders and exemplars, and they were, at least, as good actors then as they are now.

1891—1901.

While much survived that was extraordinarily fine, it was in this period that the old order gave way, rapidly, to changes which had been for some time foreshadowed, and new and inferior standards were gradually accepted. Booth, Barrett, and many others passed away near the beginning of it. Most of the excellence in it was that of the period previous, still potent. Richard Mansfield, contending bitterly for every step of his progress, became influentially operative in it. Some superb things were done at Daly's. Distinguished visitors from abroad were in America. But, with the death of Augustin Daly, in 1899, the last important, original independent manager of the finer and elder school disappeared from the American Theatre. The New York Theatrical Syndicate,—the most obstructive influence ever opposed to progress of the Dramatic Art,—operant by tyranny and intimidation, secured a blighting grasp on the theatrical business of the country. Some few things of great note extended over into the next period, a number of the greatest of actors dying in the first few years of the century,—Joseph Jefferson, Henry Irving, Charles

Coghlan, and Richard Mansfield being conspicuous among them.

The intelligent observer who can study and consider the comparative tables above given, and can then declare that the present equals, or, as we are frequently told, surpasses, every earlier period, in the matter of *acting,* will display a judgment that is at least eccentric! One of the most observant of contemporary managers, Daniel Frohman, not very long ago expressed the truth when he remarked that "scarcely any one is doing anything of any importance: they put up nobodies in 'star parts,' advertise them all over the place, and the public rushes in to see them."

The contrasts thus afforded testify, eloquently, to the condition of the contemporary Theatre as compared to that of the Theatre in the Past. The lamp of experience that was mentioned by a certain famous Virginian is still burning, and we can all be guided by it. The need of the hour is clean, honest, intelligent theatrical management, as opposed to self-proclaimed speculation,—independent and therefore competitive theatres, devoted to good plays, of all kinds, well acted. In advocacy of such administration and such institutions I have labored continuously, and as continuously I have been met with idle prattle about "devotion to the Past," "personal prejudice," and "reactionary influence." For what reason? The Past, being examined, proves to be worthy of all the devo-

tion ever expressed toward it. Wherein is it a *prejudice* to advocate excellence and to deprecate evil? Since it is true that better acting was once visible than, as a rule, is visible now, and in certain particular divisions,—notably, tragedy and romantic comedy,—better than is ever visible now, and that groups of actors have, from time to time, existed with which the actors of to-day, as a class, are not comparable, why should not a public observer say so? Wherein consists the *"reactionary influence"* of a statement of the truth? The condition of the English-speaking Stage has, at times, been deplorably bad, but that Stage has, nevertheless, risen to noble heights of dignity and virtuous power: let us hope that the thing that has been is the thing that again will be—in time. But where, in America, are the actors of To-morrow to gain the technical training without which genius is hampered and talent helpless? What is the significance of the fact that the American Stage is populous with English actors? What is the significance of the fact that the American Theatre is dominated by derogate Jews, contemned as religious apostates by representative Jewish organs—contemned as discreditable to the Jewish race by representative Jews—in some instances men with criminal records? No sane observer would think of proclaiming the hopeless decadence of the Theatre; but such an observer cannot fail to see,—admitting, and admiring, all the fine deeds that

have been done,—that within the last ten or fifteen years the tendency of the Theatre has been downward; that, by a variety of means, it has been largely despoiled of its romance and beauty; that it has been made coarse and common; that the dictators of it proclaim themselves as "shop-keepers," exult in the designation, and rejoice that the methods of exploiting beef, pork, and candles are applied to the conduct of the Theatre.

Many of the new theatres are finer than the old ones, but what is the spirit by which the new theatres are animated? Mr. Marc Klaw, in 1909, declared that, "twenty years ago," the business of the Theatre,—the business which he supposes to be perfectly administered by a Theatrical Syndicate,—was "conducted chiefly in bars, cafés, and on the streets." What is the fact? Twenty years ago the Theatre of America, artistically and commercially, was controlled by such actors and managers as Lester Wallack, Lawrence Barrett, Augustin Daly, Ada Rehan, Dion Boucicault, J. H. Stoddart, Henry E. Abbey, John B. Schoeffel, Maurice Grau, George Fawcett Rowe, John Gilbert, Denman Thompson, Genevieve Ward, Edwin Booth, Fanny Janauschek, John T. Raymond, Wilson Barrett, Henry Irving, W. J. Florence, Joseph Jefferson, Charles W. Couldock, Mrs. John Drew, Stephen Fiske, Daniel Frohman, Mary Anderson, Montgomery Field, D. H. Harkins, Steele Mackaye, Stuart Robson, William H. Crane, George Edgar, Helena Modjeska, T. Henry,

French, Ernst von Possart, Ludwig Barney, Tommaso Salvini, William H. and Madge Kendal, and so following. Can any intelligent person, any person who knows anything about theatrical history, really believe that those actors and managers, and such as those, and their agents and representatives, actually transacted their business "in bar-rooms, or on the streets"?

Speculation is the spirit of the age. Combinations exist everywhere. Monopolies flourish. In almost every branch of business life the ruling principle is expediency. Any course of conduct is tacitly approved, so that it be remunerative to its practitioner, if only he manages to secure his plunder and keep out of jail. Unscrupulous commercialism is the predominant force, and nowhere is it more supreme than in the management of the theatres of New York. Conditions were never more unpropitious to the Art of Acting and to refined civilization than they have been since the Theatre passed into the iron grasp of Monopoly and became a sort of Amusement Department Store. Those conditions, however, cannot last. If you can produce great plays and act them greatly, then, "Where the Macgregor sits is the head of the table." Mr. Mantell, the legitimate leader of the American Stage to-day, has built a splendid repertory: E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, presenting great plays of Shakespeare, are among the most prosperous actors of this time. Honest and honorable endeavors have been made

to establish legitimate, old-fashioned stock companies, and, presently, some such endeavor will be crowned with success. Seasons of reasonable length, in a reasonably large number of varied plays, will be again the rule, and the only school of acting from which the great actors of the future can come will be restored. Admiration of existing conditions has airily condemned the stock-system as presenting "square pegs in round holes,"—which is nonsense. The student of such matters has only, for example, to consult the chronicle of Wallack's Theatre, when it actually was Wallack's,—a theatre rightly representative of the achievement of the Past,—in order to obtain abundant and decisive evidence of the excellence of the old stock-company system and of its superiority to any system prevalent now. Acting, in our time, reached its pinnacle of beauty in the best days of Edwin Booth and Henry Irving. The period extending from about 1878 to about 1890 displayed so much and such variety of opulence that it would seem invidious to set the Present in comparison with it. Observation therefore might fairly pause upon one season, far removed from that exceptional period. At Wallack's Theatre in the season of 1865-'66, when Lester Wallack was manager as well as leading actor, *forty-nine* plays were acted, nine of them being new at that theatre, and, with little exception, new to the American Stage. The range of character included high comedy, tragedy,

low comedy, romantic drama, domestic drama, melodrama, and farce, and each of those plays was acted not only in a competent but in a thoroughly brilliant manner. Special personations, indeed, were such as, in the present day, would, inevitably and almost immediately, have been utilized for "starring tours." This is a list of the plays that were acted, the numerals designating the number of performances:

"The Serf"	14	"The Unequal Match"	3
"Lost in London"	23	"The Wife's Secret"	1
"The Porter's Knot"	1	"A Wonderful Woman"	6
"The Needful"	14	"The Wonder"	3
"The Clandestine Marriage"	1	"Secrets Worth Knowing"	3
"Dreams of Delusion"	9	"Still Waters Run Deep"	7
"Dombey and Son"	1	"The Serious Family"	2
"Americans in Paris"	2	"She Stoops to Conquer"	3
"Second Love"	1	"Society"	9
"Single Life"	2	"The Laughing Hyena"	3
"Married Life"	3	"The Iron Mask"	4
"Ici on Parle Français"	7	"The Rivals"	7
"The Irish Heiress"	3	"Rural Felicity"	2
"Don Cæsar de Bazan"	10	"Ladies at Home"	1
"Paul Pry"	3	"The Poor Gentleman"	3
"Romance and Reality"	3	"It Is Never Too Late to Mend"	30
"Miriam's Crime"	4	"The Eton Boy"	6
"The Double Gallant"	8	"How She Loves Him"	4
"Deaf as a Post"	3	"King and Comedian"	4
"High Life Below Stairs"	1	"The Country Squire"	2
"John Bull"	1	"The Knights of the Round Table"	2
"Henry Dunbar"	18	"The King of the Commons"	4
"Love's Sacrifice"	8	"A New Way to Pay Old Debts"	5
"The Rent Day"	4		
"Boots at the Swan"	4		
"To Marry or Not to Marry"	4		

The dramatic company then acting at Wallack's included, among other actors, Lester Wallack, Mark Smith, John Gilbert, A. W. Young, James W. Wallack, the Younger, William Holston, Charles Fisher, W. H. Norton, J. C. Williamson (now the theatrical ruler of Australia), Frederick C. P. Robinson, B. T. Ringgold, George Holland, E. L. Davenport, Clara Jennings, Ione Burke, Madeline Henriques, Fanny Morant, Mrs. Sefton, Mrs. Vernon, and Mary Gannon. Such a company could not be formed to-day, unless the best actors of a dozen of the best companies in America could be assembled, and kept in association for a year or two in order that they might become familiar with one another's methods,—and even then there would be no such tragedian as Davenport, no such light comedian as Lester Wallack, and, above all else, no actor of old men comparable, in any way, with John Gilbert. And it is humiliating to reflect that, even by such a method, the majority of the company assembled would not be Americans, but, almost certainly, Englishmen—actors who have received their early training, have learned their business, abroad, in stock companies, and in travelling repertory companies, controlled by actors.

Two of the best companies assembled, in recent years, in this country, were that which appeared in "The Witching Hour" and that which Mr. and Mrs. Fiske brought forth, in "Leah Kleschna." Where, in America, is there a theatrical company capable of

acting, and acting almost perfectly, in one season, the repertory of plays above specified? Or, since "conditions have changed," and some of our present-day pundits pronounce some of the best old plays "old-fashioned," "out-of-date," and "artificial," where is there a company capable of giving, in one season, splendid performances,—such performances as would be expected, for example, at the Lyceum, the Empire, or the Hudson,—in a repertory of the following plays, which embrace the extremes, from one-act farce to five-act tragedy?

"The Goal."
"The Magistrate."
"She Stoops to Conquer."
"The Thief."
"The Second in Command."
"The Shades of Night."
"The Great Ruby."
"The Darling of the Gods."
"A New Way to Pay Old Debts."
"The Wonder."
"Dreams of Delusion."
"The Iron Mask."
"The Rivals."
"The World and His Wife."
"Our American Cousin."
"Alabama."

Not long ago an institution which was expected to benefit the Stage and the Public went down in miserable failure, in the collapse of the New Theatre. The Directors of that institution provided "practically unlimited capital" for the venture,—an aid which Lester Wallack, for one, never had and never dreamed of having. The observer of to-day was enabled to see at first hand exactly what kind of theatrical company could be formed after a long absence of stock-com-

panies; half a million dollars was lost in the effort, and persons of experience, knowledge, and taste have had an opportunity to see what the much-vaunted "commercialism" has really done for the American Stage, and how necessary it is that other forces should control it.

III.

GEORGE HOLLAND.

1791—1870.

George Holland, the Elder, was born in London, England, on December 6, 1791. His father was a tradesman. The boy was first sent to preparatory schools in Lambeth, and afterward to a boarding-school, kept by an eccentric scholar, Dr. Duprée, at Berkhampstead, Hertfordshire. He did not prove a devoted student: he was more remarkable for his pranks than for his proficiency in learning: but he became distinguished as a cricket player. At Dr. Duprée's school he passed two years, at the end of which time he was taken home by his father and set at work in the silk and ribbon warehouse of Messrs. Hill & Newcombe, Wood Street, Cheapside, London. Prior to going thither, though, he enjoyed a vacation of six weeks and had his first experience of the Stage. Astley's Amphitheatre existed then, and was conducted by Messrs. Cross, Smith & Davis. One of those managers, Mr. Smith, happened to be a relative or acquaintance of the Holland family, and by him young George was frequently taken to the rehearsals. "Les Ombres Chinois" was the name of the enter-

tainment—a show consisting of pasteboard figures of men and animals, worked with wires, behind an illuminated screen. An incidental dialogue was delivered, correspondent to the action of those dummies. This exhibition so delighted the boy that he made an imitation of it, and so good a one that it made a hit in the home circle. With the silk mercers young Holland passed six months, selling silk and ribbons and "silk" hats, the latter articles having then only just come into fashion. Not liking this pursuit, he next procured a situation in a banking house, in Cornhill. His post was that of an out-of-door clerk and his duty required him to walk ten miles a day. Later he passed two months in a bill-broker's office and acquired acquaintance with the volatile art of "kite-flying." Then came an illness, on recovering from which he found himself a wanderer in London in quest of work. Accident soon brought him into association with the once famous Newman, who established "Newman's Echo"—a cheap sheet, presenting an epitome of the advertisements of "wants" and "situations" originally published in the expensive newspapers of the time. Reading was costly in those days, and poor men could obtain the news only by dropping into an ale-house and paying for the privilege of taking a turn at the paper. That was the cheapest way. "Newman's Echo" placed a certain class of information, gleaned from all the current journals, within everybody's reach. So good an idea

could not fail at the start. Holland worked at it with equal fidelity and energy, and Newman soon grew rich. Then he speculated with his money and was ruined, and the "Echo" ceased to be heard.

Once more unemployed, and waiting for something to turn up, young George devoted his attention to the art of fencing. This he learned from his brother, who was under the tuition of Professor Roland, then a distinguished practitioner with the foil. At the age of nineteen George was apprenticed to Mr. Thomas Davison, of Whitefriars, to learn the trade of printer, and in a vain pursuit of skill in that vocation he spent two years. While the youth did not distinguish himself as a printer, he gained positive distinction in sparring and rowing. He was a member of a boat club: he could—and frequently did—row from London Bridge to Richmond and back again, twenty miles each way: he frequented the "Free and Easy," and learned and sang comic songs therein; he made the acquaintance of Tom Cribb, Molineaux, Tom Belcher, Dutch Sam, Ikey Solomons, and other bruiser-champions; and he was known in that select society as "the Comic Chattering Cove." Thus early did those vigorous animal spirits and that overwhelming propensity to fun find vent which afterward, for so many years, gave brightness to the Stage and pleasure to multitudes of its supporters. Young Holland's way of life, however, unfitted him for the printing business, and when twenty-

one years of age he was fortunate enough to get his indentures cancelled, and thereafter he followed a natural and independent course, which is the only sure road to genuine success in life. His wanderings took him first to Liverpool. There he found no employment but had a sharp experience of poverty. From Liverpool he took passage for Dublin, where he found his father's old friend, Smith, of Astley's Amphitheatre,—employed as riding-master at the Castle School, a noted institution of the Irish capital. By that teacher he was kindly received, and under his direction he made himself useful in the riding school and became proficient as a rider and a manager of horses. The evenings he passed at the Crow Street Theatre. This equestrian and dramatic period of his experience was brief, as he soon became a commercial traveller, in the employment of Messrs. Nunn & Company, dealers in thread-lace. For two years George Holland drove a mercer's cart through Ireland, and in every town he was successful and popular. It can be imagined that, as a wit on the box and a songster in the tavern parlor, he would have great success, for good humor is a greater conqueror in the battle of life than Cæsar in the battle of nations. In 1816 Holland, at the age of twenty-five, was established in business for himself, to sell bobinet lace, manufactured in Nottingham. His shop was in Crow Street, Dublin, near the Crow Street Theatre, and immediately opposite to a favorite haunt of jolly boys, called Peter

Kearney's Inn. To that resort George frequently repaired, and there he made many theatrical acquaintances. The bobinet-lace business lasted six months, when George settled his affairs, took down his sign, and returned to England, to embark on that theatrical career which continued, through many vicissitudes of fortune, to the end of his days. George Holland was fifty-three years an actor,—more than half-a-century of entrances and exits!

The first engagement that Holland secured was made with Mr. Samuel Russell, familiarly known as "Jerry Sneak Russell," the stage-manager for Robert William Elliston—that Elliston, the Magnificent, for whom, as Charles Lamb wrote, "the Pauline Muses weep." The engagement was to last six weeks, till the close of the season at the London Olympic. Elliston then offered Holland an engagement at the Birmingham Theatre, to begin six weeks later. That interval the actor, thus regularly embarked, spent in travelling on foot, from London to Birmingham, in company with a friendly *Mr. Lanville* or *Folair,* and exhibiting his "Les Ombres Chinois" at towns on the way. That enterprise, carried on in frolic, beguiled the tedium of the journey and usually ended in a good supper. Arrived at Birmingham, Holland found Elliston grandly forgetful of the promised engagement, but ultimately he succeeded in getting a post in the great manager's company, with a salary of fifteen shillings a week. On May 19, 1817,

the theatre opened, with "Bertram" and "The Broken Sword." Holland was cast for one of the monks in the former play and as the *Baron* in the latter. With the *Monk* he prospered, but, having permitted a couple of brother actors to "make up" his face and head for the *Baron,*—which they did with a *Pantaloon* wig and all the colors at hand,—he went on in the second piece as an object of such absurdity that he was literally laughed and hooted from the stage. A dark *Baron* would have answered every purpose, but a red, white, and blue one was too much for the British public. For a long time after this misadventure the unlucky comedian was known as "Baron Holland." For many days,—so great was his mortification,—he kept away from the theatre, having, indeed, set up a school for teaching fencing and boxing. Thus the old sports became useful auxiliaries in the serious labor of earning a living. At last Holland had an explanation with Elliston, was reinstated in the company, and was made prompter. Mr. Brunton (the father of the afterward famous Miss Brunton, who finally became the Countess of Derby, and of Anne Brunton, who married, in succession, Merry, Wignell, and Warren, and was once the chief actress of the American Stage) was then stage-manager of the Birmingham Theatre. While Holland was prompter Macready came to the Birmingham Theatre and acted *Rob Roy.* Other "stars" came also, and among them Vincent de Camp, with

whom Holland formed an acquaintance that was destined to be of much value to him. He was presently offered an engagement at the theatre in Newcastle-on-Tyne, accepting which he went to London and thence proceeded to Newcastle by a sailing vessel,—that being the cheapest conveyance. On that voyage he met Miss Povey, afterward Mrs. Knight, and Junius Brutus Booth, together with other theatrical performers, bound to the same place. With Booth he formed a friendship which lasted all the days of the latter actor's life, and which the comedian always cherished in the tenderest recollection. After finishing his engagement at Newcastle, Holland went to Manchester, with Mr. Usher, and there played as *Harlequin.* That was in 1819, the year of certain local disturbances known and remembered as "the Peterloo Riots." In December of that year Holland returned to Newcastle, which thenceforward during five years he made his home. "The season," in those days, began in December and ended in May. During the summer Holland travelled, acting wherever occasion offered. While he was acting at the Newcastle Theatre, in one of his annual engagements, his fondness for practical jokes and deviltry of all sorts,—frequently illustrated in mischievous adventures,—brought a temporary disaster upon him; for, snipping at his nose, one night, with a large pair of shears, for the amusement of an enlightened public, he cut that useful organ very nearly into

two pieces. It was well mended, though, and the wound left no visible scar. Holland's exceedingly "natural acting" on that occasion (nobody in front knowing what ailed him) was the subject of universal commendation, particularly from the manager, who sent an urgent request that the comedian would nightly repeat his spirited and remarkable performance.

In the season of 1825-'26 Holland was engaged at the London Haymarket Theatre, under the management of T. P. Cooke; later he fulfilled an engagement at the Surrey Theatre; but his English career was drawing to a close. At Christmas, 1826, Junius Brutus Booth, then stage-manager of the Chatham Theatre, New York, sent a letter, offering him an American engagement. That epistle,—in the earnest, manly, simple, thoughtful style of all the writings of the great tragedian,—gives interesting details with reference to the New York Stage in 1826, when Edwin Forrest was a rising young actor, and Lester Wallack, and James W. Wallack, the Younger, were boys, and Joseph Jefferson and Edwin Booth were yet unborn. Holland did not at once come over, but the allurement proved strong, and in the following year he accepted an engagement at the Bowery Theatre. In August, 1827, in the ship Columbia, he sailed for New York.

The Bowery Theatre,—then called the New York Theatre,—was an important institution in the dramatic world when Holland came to America, and his appear-

ance there, on September 12, 1827, attracted much attention. He acted in "A Day After the Fair," then a favorite farce, and he made a decided hit. It was a long time, though, before the comedian obtained a permanent position. For years after he arrived in America he led the nomadic life of his tribe. I trace him to the Tremont Theatre, in Boston, then managed by Pelby. Afterward he played at the Federal Street Theatre, in the same city—long a favorite shrine of the Dramatic Muse. Then he returned to New York and established his residence at Yorkville. Then he performed at Albany. On January 21, 1829, he made his first appearance at New Orleans, in the Pearl Street Theatre, afterward called the Academy of Music. In the same year he acted at Louisville, Cincinnati, Natchez, Vicksburg, Montgomery, Mobile, Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, and Providence. On September 30, 1829, Holland took a benefit, at the Bowery Theatre, New York. Immediately afterward I trace him on another expedition, this time in company with Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Blake, with the eminent tragedian Cooper as manager: a powerful combination it was, and a jovial time they must have had. In June, 1830, the comedian occupied what was known as "Holland's Cottage" at Yorkville, New York. That was a snug suburban inn, and one which enjoyed much favor. Holland, indeed, was always a popular man, and if his business capacity had kept pace with his professional success he would

have gained a large fortune. That success never attended his efforts. As a worker he began, and to the last he lived in harness and ready to do his best. Leaving the Yorkville cottage, in the Fall of 1831, he once more went out with Cooper. That season of roving began on October 10 and lasted until April 10, 1832. Hamblin and John Henry Barton accompanied the party, and they played at Augusta, Savannah, Charleston, and New Orleans. Holland's portion of the entertainment was entitled "Whims of a Comedian." It was a medley and it included feats of ventriloquism for which this actor was celebrated. "The whole of this performance," said the programme, "will be recited, acted, sung, and gesticulated by Mr. Holland alone." The bill of the play contained eight distinct features, and the price of admission was one dollar, a high price in those days.

From New Orleans the party went up the Mississippi and on to Pittsburgh. There Holland's engagement terminated. He then went to Cincinnati and to Louisville, and, in association with N. M. Ludlow, gave entertainments in the principal towns of Kentucky and Tennessee. Combining forces with Mr. and Mrs. Knight, he subsequently visited Nashville, and gave performances during one week, which were successful. This was in "the cholera season of 1832," and there, as afterward at New Orleans, the performances given by Holland exerted a cheering and reassuring influence

over the public mind, inclined as it was to panic in the presence of that baleful disease. In 1834 Holland was associated with old Sol Smith in the management of the theatre in Montgomery, Alabama. Allusion is made to this fact on page 103 of Sol Smith's "Theatrical Management":

"The season in Montgomery this year (1834) commenced on the 16th of January. The celebrated George Holland joined me in the management, and the firm was Smith & Holland. . . . My business connection with George Holland was a very pleasant one. We parted at the close of the season with mutual good feelings."

Jane Placide and George H. Barrett were members of the company at this Montgomery Theatre. Holland went to New Orleans on leaving Sol Smith and was there made Secretary of "The New Orleans Gaslight and Banking Company." Not long afterward he accepted the post of private secretary to J. H. Caldwell and treasurer of the St. Charles Theatre. This was in the season of 1835-'36, which began on November 30, 1835, with Charlotte Cushman as the star, playing *Patrick,* in "The Poor Soldier"; *Helen Macgregor,* in "Rob Roy"; *Peter Wilkins, Lady Macbeth,* and other parts. During the same season Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, J. W. Wallack, C. K. Mason, Henry J. Finn, A. A. Addams, and Mme. Céleste played engagements at the St. Charles, and with all those theatrical lumi-

naries Holland had friendly relations, in his capacity as treasurer. An opera troupe, including Adelaide Pedratti, G. B. Montressor, Antonio de Rosa, and others, came on Sunday, March 6, 1836, and again on the following December 4. In the meantime Holland had been very ill, so ill, indeed, that he was not expected to recover. But a trip to Havana restored him to health and after six months in Cuba he came back with renewed vigor to his labors at the St. Charles. "The Jewess," after fifteen months of preparation, was produced with success on December 25, 1837, and the season closed on April 29, 1838. During the following season performances were given there by Forrest, Booth, J. R. Scott, Finn, J. M. Field, Farren, Sam. Cowell, Ellen Tree, Céleste, and Josephine Clifton. These details suggest what the Theatre was, in old days, in the matter of acting, and they also suggest the associations into which George Holland was thrown. On one of the bills at the St. Charles appeared these notices, which may indicate the manners of the time among the theatre-going people: "It is particularly requested that dogs will not be brought to the theatre, as they Cannot be admitted." "Peanuts are proscribed."

In the season of 1840 Fanny Ellsler appeared at the St. Charles, engaged for $1,000 a night and a benefit, on which latter occasion she was to have all the receipts except $500. These terms were made by Holland, in the absence of Caldwell, to secure the great attraction,

and keep it out of the rival theatre. On the first night the receipts were $3,446.50, and for the ten nights of Fanny Ellsler's engagement the average receipts were $2,597.35. The benefit performance brought in $3,760. Holland paid to the great dancer $10,000 for the ten performances; $3,260 for her benefit; and $1,192 for half benefit to Alvalini and Silvani, her companions,—in all, $14,453. Yet this enterprise was a thorough success for the theatre. On March 13, 1842, the St. Charles Theatre was burned, and so ended Holland's connection with the most prosperous establishment in which he had ever been engaged. Caldwell, the manager, survived his losses and was wealthy to the last, dying in New York in the autumn of 1863.

After the St. Charles had been destroyed Holland made a trip with Dr. Dionysius Lardner, who gave a series of lectures, illustrated with lanterns. The party visited Mobile, Natchez, Vicksburg, Jacksonville, Nashville, St. Louis (at which place they found "Gentleman" George H. Barrett keeping a restaurant), Louisville, Cincinnati, and Buffalo. From the latter place to Troy Holland sailed in a canal-boat. Arrived in New York, he found his old acquaintance Mitchell engaged in the management of the Olympic Theatre. He had known Mitchell since 1818, when both were members of De Camp's theatrical company, at Newcastle. By Mitchell he was engaged, and in the Olympic company he remained,—constantly acting and always

From an Old Photograph. In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.

GEORGE HOLLAND, THE ELDER
as
Bunbury Kobb, in "Rosedale."

a public favorite,—from 1843 to 1849. His first appearance was made on September 4, 1843, in "A Day After the Fair" and "The Bill of Fare." In the summer of 1844 he acted, with Mitchell's company, at Niblo's, as *Lobwitz,* in "The Child of the Regiment"; *Hassarac,* in "Open Sesame," and divers other characters. In 1849 Holland accepted an engagement at the Varieties Theatre, New Orleans, and there, says Sol Smith, "he enjoyed a popularity never perhaps equalled by any other actor in that city." Thomas Placide was then the manager of the Varieties. In 1853 Holland was a member of Burton's company, in New York. On August 10, that year, on the occasion of the opening of Burton's Theatre, he acted *Sunnyside,* in "A Capital Match," and *Thomas,* in "The Secret." In the meantime Wallack's Theatre,—at first called Wallack's Lyceum,—had been opened, on September 8, 1852; and in the third season Holland was added to the company, appearing on September 12, 1855, as *Chubb,* in John Brougham's "Game of Love." With Wallack's he remained connected,—seceding only once, which was in the panic days of 1857, when he joined Christy's Minstrels,—until the end of 1867-'68. His last engagement was with Augustin Daly. In the season of 1869-'70 he acted several times at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. His last professional appearance was made there, on January 12, 1870, as the *Reporter,* in Olive Logan's farcical comedy of "Surf." Subsequently, on

May 16, on the occasion of his benefit, the veteran appeared before the curtain,—not having taken part in the presentation (the play was "Frou-Frou"),—and made a brief but touching speech, consisting of three words: "God bless you!" He died, at No. 309 Third Avenue, New York, on Tuesday, December 20, 1870. His death had been for some time expected. During many months he clung to life by the slenderest thread. When at last,—about 5 o'clock in the morning of December 20,—he fell into his final sleep, he sank away so calmly that the friends around him were unaware of his decease. He was eighty years old. The most of his long life was passed in active industry. His last days were much oppressed by sufferings incidental to the infirmity of age. He bore those trials well, however, and flashes of his natural drollery and delightful humor often enlivened the gloom of the closing scenes.

Holland's life was full of strange vicissitudes, but it was animated by honest principle, and characterized by faithful labor and spotless integrity. He was a good man. He attained a high rank in his profession,—largely by reason of his delightful skill as an artist, but more largely by reason of his natural endowments. He was a born humorist, of the eccentric order. To the comedian is accorded the happy privilege of casting the roses of mirth on the pathway of his fellow men, making glad their hearts with cheerful and kindly feel-

ing and lighting up their minds with the sunshine of innocent pleasure. In the exercise of that privilege George Holland added in no inconsiderable degree to the sum of human happiness.

THE HOLLAND TESTIMONIAL.

During the closing years of Holland's life it was a matter of common knowledge, among persons familiar with theatrical affairs, that he was very poor. I was reminded of that fact by the following letter, which may prove interesting to readers of theatrical biography:

"477 Third Avenue [New York],
March 20, 1867.

"My Dear Mr. Winter:—

"About this time last year I received a most friendly note from you, respecting my professional services,—and since then have often seen your kind remarks of approbation of my performances,—which has prompted my boldness thus to address you, to solicit your kind notice of my Benefit, which takes place Monday next. Times and circumstances are not so favorable now—therefore require more exertions and friendly assistance to obtain a good Benefit, which was never more wanted! I have my forebodings respecting it—and can't help thinking from natural causes, it may be my last. I am sure I need say no more on the subject, but leave it to your kind consideration.

"I remain most truly yours,

"George Holland.

"P.S.—I must mention an occasion which I think you are not aware of. In your Dramatic remarks on 'The Tenement House,' at Barnum's Museum, you say: 'The players did the best they

could with the Drama. Mr. Levick in particular merits commendation for the very earnest effort that he made to give an air of reality and a warmth of feeling to artificial emotions and barren incidents. *Mr. E. Milton (an entirely new name to us) acted with neatness and fidelity the thankless part of a greenhorn in the hands of sharpers.*'

"This person is my son, Edmund Milton Holland, who, from necessity, went to give a helping hand to the Family Expenses. I did not wish him to use his own name until he feels inclined to make it his profession. When he read the above his young blood fired up with aspiring hopes, and it also caused a pleasing sensation in all the family.

"Let me say, without ceremony,—if you should feel inclined at any convenient time to drop in and have a friendly chat, I shall be most happy. At home most afternoons, and all day on Sunday.

"Adieu.

"G. H."

The "Benefit" referred to in this letter was that to which Holland, in accordance with the usage of the time, was entitled, as a part of his season's salary. I did what I could to insure abundant receipts. It seemed to me that Holland was entitled to substantial relief at the hands of members of his profession, and at the hands of the Press,—an institution which, it has ever seemed to me, should devote more attention to the reward of virtue and less to the chronicles of crime,—in recognition of his services as an actor, the credit he had reflected on his vocation, and the pleasure he had given to the public. Some time afterward, accordingly, I mentioned the subject to Joseph Jefferson and to

Lester Wallack, and also caused it to be mentioned in the newspapers to which I had access. Many persons, actors and others, manifested cordial interest in the matter, and it seemed likely that a Testimonial would be tendered to Holland. At that time the old comedian was employed by Augustin Daly, and that manager, who felt that he was paying him a good salary, objected to the project—not, perhaps, altogether without reason—as implying an invidious reflection on him by other theatrical managers. No such reflection had been intended, but Jefferson and Wallack were unwilling to proceed without Daly's sanction and coöperation, and so the project was dropped. Soon afterward Holland died, and Jefferson, an intimate friend, undertook to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral. The family wished it to be held at the church of Rev. Dr. Lorenzo Sabine, where at least one member of the Holland family was an attendant. Jefferson, accompanied by one of the sons of the deceased actor, called on Dr. Sabine and requested that he read the burial service over the body of Holland, at his church. This, at first, Dr. Sabine agreed to do, but on being informed that Holland had been an actor he withdrew his consent, and declined to permit the funeral in his church. This greatly incensed Jefferson, who inquired whether the clergyman could direct him to a church where the funeral of an actor could be held. Dr. Sabine replied,

"there is a little church around the corner where they do that sort of thing,"—meaning the Church of the Transfiguration, in West Twenty-ninth Street. "Then," exclaimed the indignant actor, "God bless 'the little church around the corner!' "—thus bestowing on that sanctuary a designation which it has ever since borne and which it is likely to bear as long as it exists. Jefferson applied at "the little church," and the Rev. Dr. George H. Houghton immediately consented to give the dead actor Christian burial. Jefferson apprised me of this incident, and, naturally, I was shocked and disgusted by Dr. Sabine's bigotry. I had long been weary of the arrogant intolerance of the Stage manifested by clergymen, and by various "Christian" organizations and individuals, and I saw that an excellent opportunity had arisen for an appeal to the better thought and feeling of the community and for a practical protest against ecclesiastical intolerance, un-Christian behavior and a brutal insult to the Dramatic Profession. I called upon Jefferson in his dressing-room at Booth's Theatre—where he was acting *Rip Van Winkle* —and communicated my views to him, saying that I thought a great Testimonial Benefit ought to be organized, in behalf of the widow and children of Holland, and that representative men and women, throughout the country, ought to be advised of the plan, as I felt sure they would wish to participate in its execution. Jefferson expressed deep sympathy with the project.

He was very far from being an irreligious man, but he was, in some sense, averse to the clergy, and not without cause, for when, in 1832, his grandfather,—the first Joseph Jefferson, a great and famous actor and one of the best of men,—died, in Harrisburg, the clergyman who officiated at his funeral, changed the burial service so as to read, instead of " . . . the soul of *our deceased brother,*" *"this man."* I requested that Jefferson would organize the movement, but that he declined to do. I agreed to undertake it, but I had not the money that was requisite to pay the preliminary expenses. This I told Jefferson, saying that I thought certain persons, of whom I gave him a list, should be assembled at a breakfast, and invited to promote the Benefit. "If you will do the work," said Jefferson, "I will pay for the breakfast." To this arrangement I assented. The Testimonial was organized and it was successful. Great public indignation had resulted from Dr. Sabine's action, and that indignation caused a splendid response to the appeal that was made, not only on behalf of the widow and children, but on behalf of the Actor's Profession. The editorial articles which I wrote and published in "The New-York Tribune," at the beginning and at the end of my labors as organizer of the Holland Testimonial, may well close this brief reference to the matter.

"A HOLLAND TESTIMONIAL.

"A movement has been made, by several journalists and actors, toward getting up a dramatic and musical performance, for the Benefit of the widow and children of the late George Holland. It will, we think, be recognized by the Public as a good movement, and as one that is made at the right time. George Holland was a worthy and upright gentleman, and an ornament to the Stage. He labored as an actor for more than half a century. He rose to distinguished eminence and he contributed largely to the merriment of his generation. His life was exemplary. After all his protracted and worthy toils, however, he remained,—at the great age of eighty years,—in comparative poverty. It was our opinion,—long ago expressed and strongly urged upon the attention of the theatrical public,—that the members of Mr. Holland's profession should have co-operated, and given a grand testimonial performance, in his honor and for his benefit, prior to his decease. In so doing they would have augmented his personal comfort and cheered the mournful hours of his gloomy decadence. Moreover, they would have done honor to themselves and elevated their own calling in the esteem of the community. The world—which likes to see 'gray service' respected, and believes in men who believe in themselves—would have seen in a movement of this sort that the Stage recognized the merit of its veteran representative and was proud of a votary who had consistently presented the art of acting in dignity and purity before the public mind. Many of the players, at one time, were eager to unite in such a testimonial, and a zealous effort was made to carry it forward. Various obstacles, though, arose, and the project was presently turned awry and 'lost the name of action.' Since then, Mr. Holland has passed to his rest—not, however, without having been made the occasion for a stupid clerical insult no less to the religion of Christ than to the profession of the Stage. The idea of a testimonial, in honor of the comedian's memory and for the benefit of

his widow and children, now comes forward again. We give it welcome, and we earnestly hope that the Public will welcome it also. It is not too late to repair the omission of a Holland Testimonial. The plan suggested is perfectly practicable. The time is ripe for its execution. Artists of the first rank have volunteered their aid. All the managers, and all members of the dramatic and musical professions—without distinction of any sort —are invited to participate in the enterprise. With the attractions that are available the project, as it now stands, cannot fail. But there ought to be such unanimity of action as will make the success unprecedentedly brilliant, and mark, with unmistakable distinctness, the esteem in which Mr. Holland was held by his professional brethren, and the esteem in which the Stage is held by the intelligent and liberal-minded community."

"THE HOLLAND TESTIMONIAL.

"ITS MOTIVE AND ITS MEANING.

"The extraordinary demonstration which has been made by the American Stage, within the last week, in aid and honor of the Holland Testimonial, has naturally attracted a large share of Public attention. With the facts on which it was based and the incidents by which it has thus far been attended our readers have had abundant opportunity of making acquaintance. It is fair to presume, also, that many among them have reflected on its twofold significance. That it is freighted with such a significance there can, at any rate, be no sort of doubt. It arose out of two motives—the sentiment of benevolence and the sentiment of righteous indignation. It assumed to atone for the lack of fortune which had attended the career of a good artist—who was also a good man; and it likewise assumed, by quiet implication, to resent an affront that had been offered to the entire profession of the Stage, as represented by one of its members, to whom in

death a clergyman refused Christian burial because he had been an actor. And what it assumed to do it has thoroughly and brilliantly accomplished. The widow and children of the old actor have been lifted above the reach of poverty and placed in that shelter of moderate and respectable competence which his own kind heart desired for them and for which he labored through so many industrious and virtuous years. More than this—as a result of greater, wider, and more permanent advantage, concerning not a single family alone, but the whole Public—the Stage has struck a blow in its own defence which was needed, and which has crowned benevolence with vindication.

"For a very long time sufferance has been the badge of the player, and pious society, like a smug *Antonio*, has called him 'dog!' From this moment the Stage assumes a new attitude. It no longer cowers in patience under ignorant misrepresentation, filthy slander, and cruel insolence. It arises in native power and asserts its own dignity and worth. There have been a unanimity and fervor of purpose and of action in the Holland Testimonial that show a deep heart thoroughly aroused and that must have impressed every attentive observer with an acute sense not less of the power of the Dramatic Profession than of its essential importance to the public welfare. Hundreds of ladies and gentlemen are connected with that pursuit. Some of its votaries are persons richly endowed with genius and talent and gracefully adorned with the charms of culture. Thousands of laborers, in crafts incidental to the art of acting, earn an honest and a decent living through the prosperity of that art. The art itself is as ancient as civilization, and is honorable with the honor of celestial gifts and of beautiful achievements. It has developed genius. It has fired patriotism. It has commemorated virtue. It has extolled freedom. It has stimulated culture. It has soothed the troubles of care-worn minds. It has stored literature with gems of thought and feeling; and it has enriched history and biography with character and wit.

"The professors of such an art,—respecting their profession and respecting themselves,—may surely claim the respect of mankind. At any rate, they do not ask too much when they ask that the unburied ashes of their brethren—dear to them in life and mourned in death—shall be protected from gratuitous indignity. In their protest against the theology that denied the burial of the Church to George Holland, because he had been an actor, we believe that the entire intelligent public most heartily joins. Great good must certainly result; the real character and solid virtues of the Stage are enlisted in its defence, and while these impress the public mind they will maintain the institution in dignity and purity, to be an honor and not a reproach."

One word more remains to be said: Defence of Dr. Sabine has been attempted, on the ground that he had refused to officiate at the funeral of Holland because the dead man had not, when living, been a communicant of the Episcopal Church. If that, in truth, had been the ground of his refusal he would have been, technically, within his rights. The prefatory rubric in the Prayer Book notes of the Service for the Dead that "the office ensuing is not to be used for any unbaptized adult, any who die excommunicate, or who have laid violent hands upon themselves." Holland could have been included only in the first category—and most persons know of many instances where that reason is not allowed to weigh. But that was not Dr. Sabine's ground. His ground for refusal was that Holland had been an actor. That fact Jefferson stated to me, at the time, and that fact, on Jefferson's

authority, I publicly asserted, at the time, and that fact was known all over the country. Dr. Sabine had ample opportunity to deny the statement, but I have not heard that he ever did deny it. In his "Autobiography," page 339, the comedian records: "He [Dr. Sabine] said that he would be compelled, *if Mr. Holland had been an actor,* to decline holding the services at the church." Christian burial was, by a "Christian" clergyman,—who, as a clergyman, could not have refused ministration to a murderer,—refused to a dead actor, because he had been an actor!—in the nineteenth century!—and in America! Whether or not that attitude has been entirely abandoned by the clergy of the present day can be ascertained by a reference to the chapter, "The Theatre and the Pulpit," in the second volume of this work.

IV.

MARY ANN DUFF.

1794—1857.

Mrs. Duff, whose maiden name was Mary Dyke, was born in London in 1794, and died in New York in 1857. Her father was an Englishman, employed in the service of the East India Company, and he died abroad while she was a child. She was one of three sisters, all of whom adopted the profession of the Stage,—making their first appearance in 1809, at a Dublin theatre,—and all of whom were remarkable for beauty of person and winning sweetness of disposition. She was early solicited in marriage by the poet Moore, who had acted with her in a benefit performance, and whose lyrics contain more than one allusion to that object of his love. He was thirty-one years old at that time. The offer was declined, and the poet subsequently wedded her sister, Elizabeth. Mary, meantime, had plighted her troth to John R. Duff, an actor of the Dublin Theatre,—an actor whom so good a judge as William B. Wood, the distinguished comedian and manager, accounted, in after years, to be but little inferior to Elliston,—and to him she was married, in

her sixteenth year. They came to America, almost immediately after their marriage, and Mr. Duff's first appearance in this country was made on November 2, 1810, at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston, but his wife did not appear till December 31, when she came out as *Juliet*. Her public career lasted from that time till 1838, when it ended in New Orleans. She was on the stage a little less than thirty years. Her growth seems to have been slow, but she bloomed into distinction and became the most eminent and admired actress on the American Stage. Boston was her stronghold, but for five years, from 1812 to 1817, she was a member of the great Philadelphia company of Warren and Wood, and there, and on the New York Stage, she likewise gained eminence. In 1828 she accompanied her husband to London, and acted at Drury Lane, as *Isabella*—with Macready as *Biron*. Young, Cooper, and Wallack were in the cast, and the *Child* was played by Miss Lane, ultimately Mrs. John Drew, the consummate *Mrs. Malaprop* of a later time. Mr. and Mrs. Duff soon returned to America, and never afterward left this country. In 1831 Mr. Duff died. He had been for some time in poor health and he had declined in professional popularity, while his wife, at first viewed as inferior to him in ability, had surpassed and eclipsed him. Ireland mentions two hundred and ninety-two parts that were played by him,—among which are *Hamlet, Benedick, The Stranger, Young Rapid, Dori-*

court, Megrim, Werter, and *Robinson Crusoe.* He was one of the thorough old-school actors who could play every line of dramatic business. His wife had the same proficiency: she personified more than two hundred and twenty characters,—the list still remaining incomplete. She was especially famous as *Isabella,* in "The Fatal Marriage"; *Jane Shore, Mrs. Haller, Mrs. Beverley, Hermione, Statira, Belvidera, Juliet, Portia, Tullia, Mary Stuart,* and *Lady Macbeth.* After her husband's death Mrs. Duff had a hard struggle with poverty,—as she was the mother of ten children, and as actors, even of the best order, were poorly paid in those days. In 1826, in New York, Mr. and Mrs. Duff received jointly, during ten weeks, a salary of only $55 a week, together with the net proceeds of one benefit. There is a contrast between the days of Mrs. Duff and the days now passing. Some of the "artists" who can obtain large payments now are scarcely able to do more than strum a banjo or whistle through a jewsharp.

About the year 1836 Mrs. Duff was married to Mr. Joel G. Sevier, and there is no record of her having been on the stage later than May 30, 1838. She lived in New Orleans, renounced the Stage, left the Catholic faith, and became a Methodist; and for many years her life was devoted to works of piety and benevolence. It appears that she ultimately became unhappy in marriage. Her last years were passed in obscurity.

Nobody knew either what had become of Mary Duff, or where she lived, or whether indeed she was alive, or where she died, or where she was buried,—till as late as the year 1874. That she had disappeared from New Orleans, with Mr. Sevier, in 1854, was the last ascertainable fact of her history. They came privately to New York, and the once great and renowned actress, now a sad, subdued, broken-spirited old lady, took up her abode with her youngest daughter, Mrs. I. Reillieux, at No. 36 West Ninth Street, where on September 5, 1857, she died. Her disease was cancer, and she expired of internal hemorrhage. An article in "The Philadelphia Sunday Mercury," August 9, 1874, written by Mr. James Rees, relates the strange circumstances of her burial. According to that authority, the body of Mrs. Duff-Sevier was laid in the receiving tomb at Greenwood, September 6, 1857, and shortly afterward that of her daughter, Mrs. Reillieux, was likewise laid there; but on April 15, 1858, both those bodies were thence removed and were finally buried in the same grave, which is No. 805, in Lot 8,999, in that part of the cemetery known as "The Hill of Graves,"—the certificate describing them as "Mrs. Matilda I. Reillieux & Co." The grave was then marked with a headstone, inscribed with the words, "My Mother and Grandmother." There seems to have been a purpose to conceal the identity of Mrs. Sevier with Mrs. Duff, and to hide the fact that the mother of Mrs. Reillieux had

ever been on the stage,—but the grave of the great actress was finally discovered, and many a pilgrim, honoring the memory of genius and virtue, will pause beside it, with reverence, as the years drift away.

A "Life" of Mary Duff was written, with laborious care and devoted zeal, by that ripe and admirable dramatic antiquarian and scholar, Joseph Norton Ireland; and his book is replete with interesting facts and significant critical opinions. The name of that author, well and widely known by his comprehensive "Records of the New York Stage," is a guarantee of accuracy and fulness of theatrical detail. He knew the history of our Stage; his judgment was sound, his taste severe, his style simple. In writing his memoirs of Mary Duff he chose,—instead of writing an exclusively personal portrayal and analysis of his heroine,—to suggest her greatness in the dramatic art, and to reproduce her identity, by reflecting the impression that she made upon the times through which she lived. Ireland frequently saw Mrs. Duff on the stage, and therefore he might have spoken from his own knowledge, without reference to the opinions of other contemporaries; but he preferred to offer an unembellished chronicle, and, with characteristic reticence and modesty, to yield the precedence to those old journals in which Mrs. Duff's performances were first discussed, at a time when they were as real to their public as those of Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs. Fiske are to the public to-day.

As it is about seventy-five years since Mrs. Duff retired from the stage there can be no person extant who distinctly remembers her acting. Readers must construct for themselves the best ideal that their imagination can form out of the testimony that her biographer's devotion has collected. Mrs. Duff seems to have been lovely more than beautiful; strong in the affectionate, melting charms of womanhood rather than in resolute, commanding, brilliant intellect; a person fitted to embody the heroines that entice and enthrall by their irresistible tenderness and grace; magical with the glamour of romance; sacred in the majesty of grief; fascinating in tears; and never so entirely triumphant as when overwhelmed with misery. The character of the parts in which she was best certainly points to that conclusion. *Hermione,*—not Shakespeare's, but the heroine of "The Distrest Mother," taken from Racine's "Andromaque,"—was a great success in her impersonation. *Jeanie Deans, Cordelia, Mrs. Haller,* and *Mrs. Beverley* were perfect as embodied by her. The dying scene of *Tullia* was one of her most tremendous and harrowing achievements. Her *Lady Randolph* was thought the best since that of Mrs. Siddons. Her madness in *Belvidera* was accounted perfection. Those indications accord with the ideal of a soulful woman, radiant with the essential spirit of her sex. The testimony gathered from contemporary tributes enables imaginative thought to conjure up her image. She

moved like a queen. The outline of her head and face was classic. She had dark, brilliant eyes, and she had a voice that ranged from the clarion call of frantic passion to the softest accents of maternal love. The play of her countenance was incessant and wonderful, and in purity and smoothness her elocution was perfect music. Such glorious creatures are seldom vouchsafed to earth. It is no wonder that they are worshipped. It is lamentable beyond words to think of the wretched fate that so often attends their steps and darkens round the ghastly tragedy of their closing hours.

V.

JAMES WILLIAM WALLACK, THE ELDER.

1795—1864.

James William Wallack, the elder of that name, was born at Hercules Buildings, Lambeth, London, August 24, 1795. He came of theatrical lineage. His father, William Wallack, was an actor at Astley's Amphitheatre, and was esteemed for merit in acting maritime parts. His mother, also connected with Astley's Amphitheatre, was an actress of uncommon talent. Her maiden name was Johannot. She was a widow when William Wallack married her, and she had a daughter, who became Mrs. Jones, and under that name was popular on the stage in London and subsequently in Boston and New York. Mrs. Jones acted at the Park Theatre, New York, in 1805, and she died in that city, November 11, 1806, aged twenty-four. William Wallack and his wife had four children, Henry John, James William, Mary, and Elizabeth. Henry, the eldest, born in London in 1790, had a long career on the English and American Stage, was especially distinguished for his excellent performance of *Squire Broadlands,* in "The Country Squire," called also "The Old

English Gentleman," and died in New York, August 30, 1870. Mary was an actress of heavy parts, and was professionally known as Mrs. Stanley. She came to America and appeared at the Chatham Theatre, New York, June 11, 1827, under the name of Mrs. Hill. She married a rich planter, and subsequently went into the South, dying at New Orleans in 1834. Elizabeth became Mrs. Pincott and was the mother of a girl who married the comedian Alfred Wigan. Henry was the father of James William Wallack, the Younger (1818-1873), generally called "Jim" Wallack, long distinguished among the actors of his time for many fine performances,—among them *King James the Fifth,* in "The King of the Commons"; *Master Walter, Léon de Bourbon,* in W. B. Bernard's drama of "The Iron Mask"; *Jaques, Werner, Fagin,* and *Henry Dunbar.* Henry was also the father of Julia Wallack, who became Mrs. W. Hoskin, and who acted, in London, as Miss Julia Harland, and of Fanny Wallack, who became Mrs. Moorhouse, was leading lady at the Broadway Theatre, New York, in 1847-'48, and died on October 12, 1856, at Edinburgh. The date of the birth of James William Wallack has been variously stated. Thomas Marshall, who wrote seventy years ago, declares that he was born August 20, 1794. The memoir of him by T. H. Morrell,—New York, 1865,—says August 24, 1795, and the inscription on his gravestone, in Greenwood Cemetery, says that he died on December 25, 1864, "aged

69." It has been affirmed that his birth was precipitated by the excitement attendant on the burning of Astley's Amphitheatre, on September 17, 1794. Astley's, long a popular London institution, built by Philip Astley, was opened in 1773.

Wallack was intended by his parents for the Navy, and at an early age the post of midshipman was obtained for him, but he preferred to be an actor, and in compliance with his wish he was sent to the Academic Theatre, an institution established by Queen Charlotte, in Leicester Square, London, for performances by English and German children. His first appearance on the stage had been made at the age of four, when he was taken on, in the spectacle of "Black Beard," at the Royal Circus, afterward the Surrey Theatre, London. When about twelve years old he attracted the favorable notice of Sheridan at one of the juvenile performances at the Academic Theatre, and thus obtained an engagement at Drury Lane, where he remained for nearly two years,—till that house was burnt down, February 24, 1809. He then went into Ireland. He was engaged, for low comedy, at the Royal Hibernian Theatre, Peter Street, Dublin, in 1810, under the management of Henry Erskine Johnston, but he returned to Drury Lane when it had been rebuilt: that theatre, reconstructed under the supervision of the celebrated architect Wyatt, was opened on October 12, 1812, with a prologue by the poet Byron, and with that theatre Wal-

lack's fortunes were associated until he migrated to America, in 1818. Edmund Kean's memorable first success as *Shylock* was made at Drury Lane, January 26, 1814, and during the subsequent season Wallack acted with Kean and had the privilege of seeing him in all the parts that he played. William Robert Elliston also acted there, but did not become lessee of the theatre until October 3, 1819, and with him likewise Wallack was professionally associated. His talents and his winning personality gained the friendship of Elliston and likewise attracted the favor of Byron, who, for about a year, was a member of a Directory organized for the management of Drury Lane,—the associates of the poet being Douglas Kinnaird, William Whitbread, C. Bradshaw, Mr. Cavendish, Lord Essex and Peter Moore. Messrs. Rae and Dibdin were managers and Mr. Ward was secretary. Whitbread died on July 6, 1815. Byron held the post of committeeman from early summer of 1815 till spring of 1816, when, on April 25, he left England, never to return.

Wallack was professionally educated in a good school and in storied and stirring theatrical times. It was his fortune to know and converse with men who had seen Garrick and Spranger Barry, and also to see the acting of Kean, Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, John Bannister, Elliston, Munden, Mathews, Cooke, Fawcett, Incledon, and many other worthies of the British Theatre. From influences thus potent and invigorating he derived a strong

impulse toward study, labor, and excellence in the art that he had chosen. He remained on the stage for more than half a century; his last performance, that of *Benedick,* in "Much Ado About Nothing," was given in New York, at his theatre, on May 14, 1859; and to the last he maintained the courtly, galliard spirit and manners of that gay, easy-going period of London social life in which his youth had been cast and his character developed.

Among the comedians who graced the London Stage in the first years of the nineteenth century was John Johnstone, an Irishman, and an excellent actor of Irish characters. Johnstone was the son of an officer of the British army, retired from the service and established in the romantic County Wicklow, Ireland. There "Jack" Johnstone was born, and there he was educated to be a soldier. But his tastes and desires took a more pacific turn, he discovered the possession of a fine voice for singing, and, discarding the pursuit of arms, he appeared at the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin, as *Captain Macheath,* in "The Beggar's Opera," was successful, and so became an actor. For that vocation he possessed uncommon advantages. His figure was above the middle size, his handsome face was winningly indicative of buoyant, sparkling humor, and his versatile mimetic talent enabled him to present, equally well, the refined Irish gentleman and the unsophisticated but shrewd and waggish Irish peasant. His manners were frank,

cordial, and agreeable. His singing was delicious. He could impersonate with adequate skill such opposite and contrasted characters as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger* and *Dennis Brulgruddery.* He was the original representative of *Inkle,* in Colman's operatic comedy on the romantic, touching story of "Inkle and Yarico," which is told in "The Spectator." Among the parts in which he was reputed to be unrivalled are *Major O'Flaherty, Paddy O'Rafferty,* and *Teague.* He sang the melody of "Savourneen Deelish" with the sweetness of the nightingale. No singing comedian of the time was considered comparable with him, and it was only by Incledon (1764-1826) that his supremacy in vocalism was contested. Johnstone had a career of forty-one years in London,—a favorite on the stage, and, during the wild days of the Regency, a favorite in the circle of Prince George's companions. His residence was in Covent Garden, opposite to the Market, and for that place his partiality was great: he was often heard to say that the cabbages gave a sweet and wholesome odor to the morning air in that region. He was prudent and he became wealthy. On his daughter's wedding day, as declared by the veteran comedian Walter Donaldson, in his "Recollections," 1865, he gave her a dowry of £20,000. The statement is improbable. Marshall records that she married without her father's consent, eloping with James William Wallack. The marriage occurred in 1817, and of that union John Lester Wallack,—known

professionally as Lester Wallack,—was born, January 1, 1820, in Bleecker Street, New York: his mother died in 1851.

The elder Wallack made his first appearance in America on September 7, 1818, at the Park Theatre, under the management of Edmund Simpson, who had just returned from England, where he had engaged a remarkably good theatrical company. Wallack was then twenty-four years old, in the prime of manhood and ardent with youthful enthusiasm relative to his art. He acted, in succession, *Macbeth, Rolla, Romeo, Hamlet,* and *King Richard the Third.* His talents were brilliantly displayed, and uncommon interest was excited as to his proceedings and welfare. He remained in America for two years, visited many cities, and was seen with admiration in many characters. His range as an actor was remarkable. In addition to the parts already named, he acted *Octavian,* in "The Mountaineers"; *Bertram, King Richard the Second; Don Felix,* in "The Wonder"; *Martin Heywood,* in "The Rent Day"; *Massaroni,* in "The Brigand," and *Don Cæsar de Bazan.* His personal appearance at that time is described in "Notes and Comments on Shakespeare," by the comedian James H. Hackett: "His figure and bearing, on or off the stage, were very distingué; his eye was sparkling; his hair dark, curly, and luxuriant; his facial features finely chiselled; and, together with the natural conformation of his head, throat, and chest, Mr.

Wallack presented a remarkable specimen of manly beauty."

After one season in England, which followed his American tour, Wallack, in 1822, again came to America, and this time he met with a serious misfortune. Those were the days of stage-coaches, and in making the journey from New York to Philadelphia he was in a coach that was overturned and smashed, and one of his legs was broken. That accident compelled his retirement from the stage for eighteen months, and after that time he was lame. He acted in New York two years later, and then returned to England and was employed as stage-manager, at Drury Lane, under Elliston's direction. In 1827 he again acted with Edmund Kean, appearing in " Othello." He participated in the farewell benefit performance for the famous clown Grimaldi, which occurred at Drury Lane, June 28, 1828, and at the close of that season he was complimented by a presentation of silver plate, from his brother actors, led by the elder Charles Mathews. In 1828 he again visited America, bringing "the favorite actress Mrs. Barnes"; and for his services at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in November of that year he received $200 a night,—at that time considered an exceptionally munificent compensation. Forrest was acting at the Walnut Street Theatre and Cooper at the Chestnut Street at the same time.

Mary Russell Mitford's tragedy of "Rienzi" was

produced at the Park Theatre, New York, January 7, 1829, and Wallack played *Rienzi.* "In characters of an heroic or romantic cast," said a contemporary review, "when the moral feelings of the audience are enlisted on his side, there is no man like him." He continued to cross and recross the Atlantic, appearing in both England and America, for a considerable time. At one period,—from September 4, 1837, till September 23, 1839, when that house was burnt down,—he managed the National Theatre, in New York,—at the corner of Church and Leonard Streets. That was the first "Wallack's," but it did not bear that name. It was there that N. P. Willis's play of "Tortesa the Usurer" was first acted, April 8, 1839. (Charles Kean was to have appeared in the National Theatre,—as *King Richard the Third,*—on the night that proved its last.) Wallack then went to Niblo's Garden, with his company, and maintained himself there for a short season. He was stage-manager at the Princess' Theatre, London, in 1843, and there he made a signal hit as *Don Cæsar de Bazan.* It was not until about 1851 that he finally settled in New York and made that city his permanent home. His opportunity of reviving his theatre came in the wreck of Brougham's Lyceum, started by John Brougham,—a house which failed, after an unsuccessful career, extending from December 23, 1850, to March 17, 1852. Wallack then leased it and, eventually, made it a substantial, prosperous theatre.

His last appearance in London was made in 1851, at the Haymarket, as *St. Pierre,* in Sheridan Knowles's play of "The Wife."

Wallack's Theatre, near the southwest corner of Broadway and Broome Street, New York, was opened on September 8, 1852, with Morton's comedy of "The Way to Get Married." Lester Wallack, who was stage-manager, played *Tangent.* The company comprised J. W. Wallack, Lester Wallack, William Rufus Blake, Charles Walcot, John Brougham, Charles Kemble Mason, Charles Hale, F. Chippendale, Malvina Pray (afterwards Mrs. W. J. Florence), Miss J. Gould, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Charles Hale, Mrs. John Brougham, Mrs. Cramer, and Laura Keene. Miss Keene soon seceded and opened a theatre of her own. The Broome Street house continued to be Wallack's till 1861, when, on September 25, the scene was shifted to the building, afterward called the Star Theatre. That house was opened with Tom Taylor's play of "The New President." On January 4, 1882, Wallack's Theatre was opened on the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street, but in the meanwhile its founder had died and the property had been inherited by his son. The elder Wallack died on Christmas Day, 1864, at No. 210 East Fourteenth Street, New York. Wallack's theatre, first and last, has been the scene of comedy performances of exceptional brilliancy, and almost every distinguished dramatic name of the period from 1882 to

the present time has been, directly or indirectly, associated with it.

James William Wallack acted in tragedy, comedy, and melodrama, and he was admired in all, but he shone particularly in comedy. His distinguishing characteristic in that field was the easy, graceful, sparkling, winning brilliancy with which he executed his artistic designs. An actor shows the depth and quality of his nature in his ideals, but there he stands on the same ground with all other intellectual persons who are students of human nature and of life. It is in the methods by which he expresses and presents his ideals that he shows his distinctive power, ability, and resources in the dramatic art, and there he stands on ground that is his own. Wallack's ideals were made the theme of controversy. Hackett, for example, thought that his *Hamlet* "lacked a sufficiency of weight, in the philosophical portions, and also of depth and intensity of meditation, in the soliloquies." But no observer could doubt or dispute the clearly defined purpose, or the pervasive animation, or the affluent, copious, picturesque grace and variety of execution with which his artistic purpose was fulfilled. His presence, whether in repose or motion, quickly absorbed a spectator's interest and held it, charmed and delighted, as long as he remained on the scene. His person was symmetrical and fine. His demeanor was marked by natural dignity and by engaging personal peculiarities. His voice was rich,

sweet, and clear, his articulation distinct, and when he spoke under strong excitement,—as in some passages of *Rolla,*—his sonorous tones flowed over the action in a veritable torrent of musical sound. In acting, although he possessed the quality of repose, he was addicted to rapid movement. He was everywhere at once in such parts as *Benedick* and *Don Felix,* and he filled the scene with pictorial vitality and dazzled the observer by the opulence of his enjoyment. He was alive to the tips of his fingers, and he was entirely in earnest. As a comedian his style probably reflected that of Elliston,—the Magnificent,—as readers can still see him, in the pages of Charles Lamb; yet he had a way of his own, and he wrote his name, broad and deep and in letters of gold, across the dramatic period through which he lived. His range of parts was extensive. He acted *Hamlet, Macbeth, Rolla, Octavian, Richard the Third, Don Felix, Shylock, Richard the Second, Coriolanus, Benedick, Martin Heywood, Massaroni, Don Cæsar de Bazan, Doricourt, Dick Dashall, Rienzi, Master Walter, St. Pierre, Tortesa, Jaques, Rover, Sir Edward Mortimer, Delmar,* in "The Veteran"; *Reuben Glenroy,* and many other characters. Sheridan Knowles, who saw him as *Master Walter,* acting in association with Charlotte Cushman, as *Julia,* declared him to be the best representative of that part he had ever seen, and Knowles added, with Celtic fervor and excess, "I never understood the char-

acter before." In romantic tones, rich and various color, and the delicious effervescence of animal spirits he was seen at his best as *Don Felix, Don Cæsar, Benedick, Rover,* and the pictorial brigand *Massaroni,*—but his peculiar, earnest, passionate touch of serious feeling,—as in *Rolla's* dying speech to *Cora,* the pathetic scorn of *St. Pierre,* the settled gloom of *The Stranger,* and the romantic, sad reserve of *Reuben Glenroy,*—was incisive and tenderly impressive. He excelled in quick transitions and theatrical surprises. When, for example, he reappeared in New York, after the accident that made him lame, he hobbled forth on crutches, as gouty old *Captain Bertram,* in "Fraternal Discord"—a play adapted by William Dunlap from the German of Kotzebue, and one in which, as *Bertram* and *Bowline,* Hodgkinson and Jefferson, the third (the father of our *Rip*), had been famous—his audience was grievously afflicted by the conviction that their favorite had become a permanent cripple; but, in the after-piece, "My Aunt," he astonished and delighted them by bounding on the stage as *Dick Dashall,* buoyant with the elasticity of youth. Wallack was essentially a dramatic person, and whether off the stage or on was picturesque. In private life his manners were formal. His image, at the last, as I saw and remember him, is that of a slight, erect, agile figure, clad in black; the face pale; the features sharply defined and handsome; the eyes large, dark, and brilliant; the hair abundant and as white as snow;

the head and carriage intellectual and stately; the smile ready and sweet, and the demeanor placid and charming with natural, perfect refinement. He was courteous to everybody, and kindness itself to those he loved. Time had not destroyed in the man the affectionate heart and the simple trustfulness of the child. The labors and the laurels of threescore years and more rested lightly on his honored head, and he went to the grave amid blessings.

VI.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

(THE ELDER BOOTH.)

1796—1852.

THE life of Junius Brutus Booth was full of incident. He lived a few months more than fifty-six years. He was born in St. Pancras's Parish, London, May 1, 1796, and he died on board of the steamboat J. S. Chenoweth, on the Mississippi River, November 30, 1852. His grandfather, John Booth, was a silversmith. His grandmother, Elizabeth Wilkes, was a relative of that able demagogue, Wilkes the Agitator. His father, Richard Booth, was a lawyer, and a Briton who, believing in "Wilkes and Liberty," also reverenced the character of Washington—a different man from the member for Middlesex. Junius was well educated and he early showed a taste for literature and the arts. His first essays at the practical business of life were experimental. He tried printing; he tried the British navy; he tried painting and sculpture; and he tried the law; but all those trials came to nothing. At last he hit upon the right vocation and became an actor. That was in 1813, and he remained on the stage from that time till the

end of his days, a period of thirty-nine years, so that he had a professional career lasting four years longer than that of Garrick and ten years longer than that of Kean.

He began modestly, as *Campillo,* in Tobin's comedy of "The Honeymoon," December 13, 1813, at Deptford, at a salary of one pound a week. Then for three years he led the life of a strolling player,—a life which, to a hardy youth of seventeen, must have been a pleasant one, more especially as it involved a trip to the Continent. One of the first writers whose favorable opinion he attracted was the malignant Anthony Pasquin (Dr. John Williams), (1761-1818), who gave him advice, in a small way, characteristic of the man. Booth's first appearance in London was made in his novitiate, when he came forth, at Covent Garden, as *Silvius,* in "As You Like It," and when Miss Sally Booth, who was one of the players there, considerately suggested that he should add "e" to his name, so that she might not be disgraced by implication of relationship to him. After that he returned to the provinces, and presently, at Brighton, an accidental opportunity arrived for him to win exceptional distinction. Edmund Kean had been announced there, to play *Sir Giles Overreach,* but he did not come, and Booth was assigned as a substitute for the famous actor,—then in the morning of his prodigious success. It was a perilous ordeal, but the young aspirant passed it with honor, and the tide of his fortunes began to rise. On February

12, 1817, he was allowed a trial night at Covent Garden, as *King Richard the Third,* and he acted there with such splendid ability that the adherents of Kean, and even Kean himself, became alarmed at the apparition of so dangerous a rival.

Many pages have been written about the troubles which thereupon ensued betwixt Covent Garden and Drury Lane. An effort was made, in which Kean was an active participant, to lure Booth away from the former theatre, to engage him at the latter, to make him act with Kean, at a disadvantage to himself, and then finally to shelve him. To some extent the scheme succeeded. Booth, never a worldly-wise person, was only in his twenty-first year at that time, and he fell an easy prey to the wiles of his enemies. He could not obtain the salary that he wanted at Covent Garden; he was under no contract; he was adroitly tempted by Kean, who personally called on him; and so he went to Drury Lane, and appeared there as *Iago,* to Kean's *Othello,* February 20, 1817; but as soon as he ascertained the significance of Kean's sudden friendship he made his peace with Covent Garden and went back to that theatre. The adherents of Kean were determined, however, that he should not again appear. A riot was instigated, and Booth, for a time, was put to silence. But the uproar by-and-by subsided, and Booth continued to act, at Covent Garden and elsewhere in London. The most that can be said, in just

From an Old Engraving. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH, THE ELDER.

censure of his conduct in that business, is that he behaved with irresolution and the weakness of inexperience. But he is not the only young man who ever made a mistake, and the graver fault was theirs who perplexed and misled him. His subsequent career in Great Britain was comprised within four years, in the course of which time he appeared in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and other cities. In the spring of 1820 he acted as *King Lear* at Covent Garden, and in the summer of the same year he appeared in a round of plays, with Kean, at Drury Lane. On January 18, 1821, he was married to Miss Mary Anne Holmes, and in company with his wife, after a visit to France and to the Island of Madeira, he came to America, landing at Norfolk, Virginia, on June 30, that year. The rest of his life was passed in America, although he visited England, and acted there, in 1825-'27, and again in 1836. A notable incident of the first of those visits was his reconciliation with Kean: "He has been quite ill and looks wretchedly," Booth wrote at that time; "I passed an hour with him, last night, at his quarters, and reconciled our ancient misunderstanding."

Booth's first appearance on the American Stage was made, July 6, 1821, at Richmond, Virginia, as *Richard the Third;* his last at the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, November 19, 1852, as *Sir Edward Mortimer* and *John Lump.* Between those extremes lies the story of his American career. It was one of brilliancy

and waywardness, attended by many stirring triumphs, darkened by errors of human frailty, but rewarded by a moderate competence of wealth, and rounded by a noble professional fame. The details of it are the details of numerous engagements in various cities. In New York Booth was conspicuously associated with the old Park Theatre, the Bowery, and the National; in Boston, with the Tremont, the Federal, and the Museum; in both cities, and indeed throughout the United States, he was greatly admired. He never remained long in one place and he seldom assumed business responsibilities. He was once stage-manager for Henry Wallack, at the Chatham Garden, in New York, and once stage-manager for Caldwell, at the Camp, in New Orleans, and he leased and managed for a while the Adelphi, in Baltimore. In England he had acted with Kean; in America he acted with Cooper and Forrest; and in certain directions he surpassed them. At New Orleans, in 1828, he acted *Orestes,* and he did that with such brilliancy and passion that he was hailed, by French actors, as another Talma.

Almost immediately after Booth's arrival in America he bought a farm, at Belair, Harford County, Maryland, in a wooded, romantic solitude, far from the abodes of men, and that hermitage he made his headquarters, emerging, from time to time, to astonish mankind on the stage, and straightway escaping again into his retreat. On that domain he forbade the use of

animal food, and he would not permit any living creature,—not even a reptile,—to be killed. Ten children were born to him, of whom Edwin, later so famous, was the seventh. He loved his children with passionate devotion, but his mode of rearing them was as eccentric as his management of his own wonderful faculties. He wished them to till the ground and to learn mechanical trades, and he counted education, such as he had himself received, superfluous and useless. He loved to work in the earth, to watch growing plants, to have the companionship of trees, and to listen to the sounds of the forest. At certain periods, and especially after death had bereaved him of two of his children, under pitiful circumstances, he was the victim of dark moods, in which his reason became unsettled, and in which his actions were fantastic, weird, comic, or insane. Many stories have been told of his vagrant wanderings in the woods; his long walks from city to city; his midnight rides in the dress of *Richard* or *Hamlet;* his capricious treatment of audiences; his funeral ceremonials over dead animals and birds; his compassionate sympathy with vagabonds; his mysterious disappearances; his moody reveries; his inequality as an actor; his fitful industry; his strange fluctuations between a cosmopolitan fellowship with mankind and a Timon-like isolation; his power to read the Lord's Prayer in such a way as to convulse his hearers with emotion; and his terrific outbursts of

ferocious passion on the stage. Once, after playing *Cassius* perfectly during the first three acts, he suddenly entered, for the fourth, walking on the tips of his toes. Once he went through the whole performance of *Pierre,* in "Venice Preserved," in a whisper, only raising his voice at the last, to remark, with placid satisfaction, "We have *deceived* the Senate." On another occasion he felt it necessary to scrape the ham out of some sandwiches that had been provided for his repast, just before he went on to act *Shylock.* The reminiscences of old actors and play-goers have preserved scores of such traits, and among them, no doubt, many fictions. Booth was a wild, strange being, as mysterious as the haunted wanderer of "The Ancient Mariner," the poem which, of all poems, he loved best, and which affords a striking emblem of his singular spirit.

Booth's detractors did not hesitate to accuse him of simulating eccentricity. One of the old theatrical writers says it, in so many words. No sillier calumny was ever uttered. The honesty of his life, the agony of his sufferings, and the revelation that he made, in his acting, of the depths of human misery, answer and dispose of it forever. No enemy ever imputed to him, living or dead, a dishonorable action. He promoted no public scandal. He brought no disgrace on his profession. He had no professional animosities. He persecuted nobody. He was just and kind in the relations of domestic and social life. He wore the laurels of a

unique fame with more than the modesty and simplicity of a child. The public loved him, and when he died the news brought tears to the eyes of thousands. Rufus Choate, himself a great genius and a man competent to understand such a nature, spoke the general feeling of that hour when he exclaimed, "Then there are no more actors!"

The fact which seems to suggest the elder Booth, if not to define him, as an actor, is that he was heedless and imperfect as an artist but electrical and fascinating as a man. He would, for example, when acting *Macbeth,* deliberately go to the wing and obtain a broadsword, from the hand of the prompter, with which to fight the final battle, and would do that in full view of the audience,—just as Ristori, when acting *Lady Macbeth,* would carry *Macbeth's* letter to the side and throw it away. He did not care, when acting *Richard the Third,* whether he wore an old dressing-gown or a royal robe, and he heeded little where other persons entered or stood, so that they appeared somewhere. His acting entirely lacked the finish which was so eminently characteristic of that of his great contemporary Macready and of that still greater artist, the late Henry Irving. But authentic testimony signifies that the soul that he poured into it was awful and terrible: the face, the hands, the posture, the movement,—all was incarnate eloquence; and when the lightning of the blue-gray eyes flashed, and the magnificent voice

gave out its deep thunder-roll, or pealed forth its sonorous trumpet-notes, the hearts of his hearers were swept away as on the wings of a tempest. Each tone and each action was then absolutely right. Even his marvellous elocution, which brought out the subtle meaning of every sound in every syllable, seemed inspired,—such and so great was the vitality which a glorious imagination, thoroughly aroused, could strike out of a deep, passionate heart. An informing remark was made to me by Joseph Jefferson, who had often acted with him: "The greatest tragic actor I have ever seen," said Jefferson, "was Junius Booth. He was not the equal of Macready as an intellectual artist, but his spirit was extraordinary and overwhelming. When he acted *Sir Giles* you never thought of looking at his gestures and motions; it was what was inside of the man that you saw. His face, in the last act, used to twitch: he was like a caged wild beast." Yet his acting was art—not delirium: unless intoxicated, his brain retained absolute control of his emotions. Booth played many parts: there is descriptive record of him in about twenty of the greatest: but probably he was at his best in *King Richard the Third, Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer, Iago,* and *Shylock.* Edmund Kean excelled in depicting misery and awakening passion: to him belonged such parts as *Othello* and *The Stranger.* Booth's peculiar grandeur was in the region of the supernatural and the terrible.

VII.

JAMES HENRY HACKETT.

1800—1871.

The dramatic veteran James Henry Hackett died December 28, 1871, at Jamaica, Long Island, in the seventy-second year of his age. He departed in the ripeness of time and the maturity of experience, with all his honors gathered and all the purposes and possibilities of his career fulfilled. His death, therefore, was one of those bereavements to which the mind submits, with sorrow, indeed, but with natural resignation. Nothing of that consternation, nothing of that bitterness of grief, with which we contemplate a life that seems prematurely broken could mingle with regret for the loss of that admirable artist and original and interesting character. He had finished his work. He had enjoyed, in liberal abundance, the rewards of success and the laurels and privileges of well-earned fame. Nothing was left for him but rest, and into that he entered.

The record of Hackett's life has been written by his own hand—in an "Autobiography" which has enjoyed

a wide circulation among the readers of theatrical literature. He was born in New York, at No. 72 William Street, on March 15, 1800. His father was a Hollander and had been a lieutenant in the Life Guards of the Prince of Orange. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. Abraham Keteltas, of Jamaica, Long Island—a clergyman of ability and learning, of whom it is said that in the discharge of his ministerial duties he often officiated in three languages. From those sources it was natural that the boy should inherit great sturdiness of physical constitution and a strong impulse toward intellectual pursuits. While he was yet a child his parents removed to Jamaica, Long Island, where, in 1805, he became a pupil at the Union Hall Academy, then directed by Mr. Eigenbrogdt, a teacher of local repute. He remained there ten years. In 1815 he entered Columbia College, where, however, he studied only one year. In 1817 he was a law student with General Robert Bogardus; and at this time he first dabbled in theatrical pursuits. In 1818 he engaged his services as a clerk. In 1819 he married Miss Catherine Leesugg, a singing actress at the Park Theatre, who then withdrew from the stage. From 1820 to 1826 he remained in mercantile pursuits, living part of the time in Utica and part of the time in New York. Unsuccessful speculations, during 1825, led to bankruptcy, and thereupon he reverted to his early taste for the Drama. His wife reappeared, on February 27, 1826, at the Park

Theatre, as the *Countess,* in "The Devil's Bridge," and as *Marian Ramsay.*

On March 1, 1826, Hackett made his first appearance at the same house, in the character of *Justice Woodcock,* in "Love in a Village." The effort was a failure. On March 10, however, he made a second endeavor, enacting *Sylvester Daggerwood,* in "New Hay at the Old Market" (1795), by George Colman, the Younger, and introducing imitations of the elder Mathews, Edmund Kean, and other actors. Those were remarkably clever, and they at once drew attention to the actor, who thereupon determined to persevere in the newly chosen calling. His third appearance, on June 19, was made in the Yankee character of *Uncle Ben,* and the French character of *Morbleau,* in "Monsieur Tonson." Success continued to attend him. His *Dromio of Ephesus,* first seen on October 25, 1826, made an emphatic hit. Towards the end of that year he went to England, making his first professional appearance in London, at Covent Garden, April 6, 1827. A little later he acted at the Surrey Theatre, and gave a clever imitation of Kean's *King Richard the Third.* It is a notable fact that, although Hackett's best achievements and most conspicuous triumphs were won in comedy, his aspirations were almost invariably directed toward tragedy. Upon his return to America he appeared in several new parts, one of which was *Rip Van Winkle,* in which, for many years, he held pre-

eminence in public favor. His personation of that character was based directly upon Irving's sketch, and it was a true and strong reproduction of the commonplace, good-natured vagabond, whom, in a later time, the delicate genius of Jefferson,—by the skilful alteration of circumstances, the infusion of a subtle spirit of poetry, and a perfect method,—lifted into the higher realm of the ideal. Hackett's acting, at the point where *Rip Van Winkle* hears that his wife is dead, gave as true a touch of nature as ever was seen. Facial expression, voice, and gesture,—the mournful, half physical reminiscence, the convulsive sob, the artless, involuntary utterance,—all concurred to reveal the deep sincerity of that love which was the man's second nature, and which dignified his wretchedness, degradation, and rags. That, and certain bits of his *Monsieur Mallet* and his *Falstaff*, displayed Hackett as an original, natural, unique actor in parts of serio-comic character. The public accepted him as an artist of that class,—and it was not till new lights had arisen, in a new time, and the powers of the veteran had begun to wane beneath the chill of frosty age that his grip upon popularity was relaxed.

In 1829 and 1830 he was, for a while, associated with the management of the Bowery and the Chatham theatres. It was about this time that he first played *Falstaff*. In 1832 he made a second visit to England, and in 1840, 1845, and 1851 he made other visits to that

country, and successful professional tours. In 1837 he managed the National Theatre in New York; and in 1849 he was lessee and manager of the Astor Place Opera House, when certain ruffians, adherents of Forrest, attempted to drive Macready from the stage, and thus caused the fatal riot. In 1854 Hackett introduced Grisi and Mario to the American public, presenting them in New York, at Castle Garden, on September 4, in that year. Subsequently, on October 2, the New York Academy of Music was, for the first time, opened to the public, and those artists appeared there, under Hackett's direction. The professional career of the actor during the last seventeen years of his life was marked by no considerable occurrence. He continued to act, in an itinerant and somewhat fitful and obscure manner, till the season of 1868-'69, when he abandoned active employment. His first wife died in 1840. They had three sons, of whom the second, John K. Hackett, became well known upon the Bench. Hackett contracted a second marriage in 1866. The sickness of which he died was the first serious ailment that he ever suffered. His disease was dropsy, complicated by a disorder of the lungs. His widow died in ———. Their only child, a son, is Mr. James Keteltas Hackett, an actor of talent and contemporary popularity.

Hackett, as an actor, was remarkable chiefly for his *Falstaff*. That was last seen in New York when the veteran played his final engagement at Booth's Theatre,

from November 29 to December 25, 1869. He acted in both "King Henry IV." and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." His *Falstaff* was a symmetrical and extraordinary blending of intellect and sensuality. The external attributes were perfect. The burly form, the round, ruddy face, the rimy fringe of gray whiskers, the bright, penetrating, merry eyes, the rows of even, white teeth, the strong, hard voice, the pompous, gross, selfish, animal demeanor, tempered at times by wily sagacity and by the perfect manner of an old man-of-the-world, combined to make it an admirably distinct and natural embodiment in all that relates to form. As to the spirit of the work there were wide differences of critical opinion,—as invariably occurs with reference to art of decided character and conspicuous merit. It is, as a rule, only concerning things of no importance that everybody is agreed. The humor of Hackett's *Falstaff* was not so much unctuous as it was satirical. He interpreted a mind that was merry, but one in which merriment was strongly tinctured with scorn. It cared nothing about virtue, except that some persons trade on that attribute; and it knew nothing about sweetness, except that it is a property of sugar and a good thing in sack. The essence of his conception was most perceptible in two scenes—in the delivery of the soliloquy on Honor, in "King Henry IV.," and in the fat knight's scene, at first alone, then with *Bardolph,* and then with *Master Brook,* after the ducking in the Thames, in "The Merry Wives of Wind-

From a Photograph of an Engraving. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JAMES HENRY HACKETT

as

Sir John Falstaff, in "King Henry IV."

sor." The first,—in its sly shrewdness, contempt for self-sacrifice, and utter inability to comprehend nobleness of motive or conduct,—was almost sardonic. The latter,—in its embodiment of the discomfort of a balked and fretted sensualist, and the rage and self-scorn of a sensible man at having been physically humiliated,—was indescribably ludicrous, because of its absolute, profound seriousness. Those indications pointed to a stern individuality, latent within the humor and the boisterous conviviality of the man—and that was the basis of Hackett's ideal. With respect to method he was a bold artist. He painted with broad, vigorous strokes. His *Sir Pertinax MacSycophant* and his *O'Callaghan* were drawn and colored with extraordinary care and taste, and those showed him,—at least in the latter part of his career,—to be a master of the art of elaboration. He played *King Lear* and *Hamlet,* in 1840, for the first time, and very seldom thereafter; but he made no impression with those tragic parts. He possessed gravity but not solemnity. He knew the passions by sight, but not by feeling. His greatness consisted in the vigorous illustration of strongly defined, eccentric characters and in the unconscious expression of that everlasting comicality which such characters dispense upon the conduct of life.

Hackett held his profession in sincere esteem and strove by all the means at his command to advance its interest and its repute. To him is due the honor of hav-

ing projected the plan for a Shakespeare Monument in the Central Park, the cornerstone of which was laid, under his auspices, on April 23, 1864—the Shakespeare Tercentenary. Hackett was highly respected as a man and prized as a friend. His life was passed in the conscientious service of art, and it was crowned with the laurels of integrity and honor.

VIII.

EDWIN FORREST.

1806—1872.

On the night of November 22, 1872, while listening, in Steinway Hall, to Edwin Forrest's reading of the tragedy of "Othello," a presentiment that he would soon and suddenly die was borne in upon my thoughts with such affecting force and solemnity that I was impelled to choose what words from his lips should be the last ever heard by me, and, obeying that impulse, I left the hall immediately on his conclusion of the heart-broken utterance of desolate agony which ends with "Othello's occupation's gone." He spoke that speech with more than a mournful beauty of intonation. He spoke it from his inmost soul,—pouring forth in those few words an agonizing sense of utter failure, forlorn wretchedness, and irremediable woe. The memory of that relentless trouble and hopeless sorrow was still fresh, when the announcement came that Forrest was dead. He expired on December 12, 1872, at his home in Philadelphia, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

A great vitality, an enormous individuality of character, a boundless ambition, a tempestuous spirit, a life

of rude warfare and often of harsh injustice, an embittered mind, and an age laden with disappointment and pain were thus ended. Forrest,—partly from natural bias to revolt and partly from the force of circumstances and the inexorable action of time,—had made shipwreck of his happiness; had cast away many golden opportunities; had outlived his fame; had outlived many of his friends and alienated others; had seen the fabric of his popularity begin to crumble; had seen the growth of new tastes and the rise of new idols; had found his claims as an actor, if accepted by many among the multitude, rejected by many among the judicious; and, in wintry age, broken in health, dejected in spirit, and thwarted in ambition, had come to the "last scene of all," with great wealth, indeed, but with little of peace or hope. His nature,—which should have been noble, for it contained elements of greatness and beauty,—was diseased with arrogance, passion, and cruelty. It warred with itself and it made him desolate. He had long been a wreck. There was nothing before him on earth but an arid waste of suffering; and, understanding him thus, it was a relief to think of him as beyond the reach of trouble, and where neither care, nor sorrow, nor pain could touch him any more.

The life of Forrest was unusually crowded with such incidents as naturally attend the career of a popular actor, and also with such incidents as are but too likely to attend the development of a rudely energetic char-

acter, struggling,—from worldly motives and by worldly ways,—out of the obscurity of poverty into the distinction of riches. In his bright days he was the conspicuous figure in many popular pageants, and he was also the originator of many quarrels and the centre of much strife. He filled a large space in the history of the American Stage. His name and his presence were familiar to the people in many cities. He was the exponent of a distinct school of acting, and there were elements in his rugged and turbulent individuality which made it interesting, significant, and usefully responsive to intelligent study.

Edwin Forrest was born in Philadelphia on March 9, 1806. His father was a native of Scotland; his mother a native of Germany. His father was a commercial traveller, in which vocation he came to America. In boyhood Edwin's health was delicate, and until he reached the age of fourteen, when he began to grow strong, his relatives doubted whether he would survive to man's estate. At about the age of fourteen he went into the West, and from that change of residence he derived benefit; his constitution turned out to be hardy, and eventually he became one of the most athletic men of his generation. As a child he exhibited taste and aptitude for declamation. At the age of eleven he participated in a theatrical representation, being then a member of a private amateur dramatic club in Philadelphia. Once, in a performance given by that club, he

played *Harlequin,* wearing nankeen trousers which he had marked in squares and painted. Another time he acted a female part, and, on being hissed by a young person in the audience whom he recognized, he came to the footlights, and addressed the sibilant spectator in these words: "Damn you, D———, you wait till I get through with this part, and I'll lick you like hell." The incident is significant. To "lick like hell" everybody who presumed to disapprove of either his acting, his conduct, or his character was, during many years, the spontaneous and intense desire of Forrest; for he thought that the disapproval was always insincere, malicious, and hostile, and that the "licking," accordingly, would be a just and suitable retribution. His first appearance on the regular stage was made at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on November 27, 1820, when he acted *Douglas,* in Home's play of that name,—an ambitious attempt to be made by a boy of fourteen. It attracted little attention, but it seems to have shown precocity, both physical and mental. His next part, played in the same engagement, was *Frederick,* in "Lovers' Vows,"—the play that Mrs. Inchbald made out of Kotzebue's drama of "The Natural Son." That production, shelved for many years, was once popular, and *Frederick* was a favorite part with beginners on the stage. Still later, for his benefit, the young actor appeared as *Octavian,* in Coleman's play,—on episodes in "Don Quixote,"—of "The Mountaineers";

and this closed the first chapter of his professional record.

In 1822 Forrest obtained an engagement with Messrs. Collins and Jones, actors and managers well known, in their day, on the Southwestern theatrical circuit. They were then managing the Cincinnati Theatre; and it was there that Forrest made his first appearance under their direction, acting *Young Melfort,* in Andrew Cherry's comedy of "The Soldier's Daughter"; and subsequently, for his benefit, he made his first attempt at *King Richard the Third.* Mention of those performances occurs in the "Autobiography" of Sol Smith, who was then editing a paper in Cincinnati. "When I gave a very favorable opinion of Forrest's acting, in the comparatively trifling character of *Melfort,*" says that writer, "my brother editors laughed at me; and afterward when he played *Richard,* for his benefit, and I prophesied his greatness, they set me down as little less than a madman. 'He was a clever boy, certainly,' they said, 'but puffing would ruin him.'" The stock company of which Forrest was a member comprised, beside Messrs. Collins and Jones and himself, Messrs. Scott, Davis, Eberle, Henderson, and Groshon; Mrs. Pelby, Mrs. Riddle, Miss Riddle, Miss Eliza Riddle, then a child, and Miss Fenton. In the summer of 1822 that company went to Louisville; but business there proved bad, and a party of those players, including Forrest, presently returned to Cincinnati, and appeared at the Globe Theatre. It was

there that he first acted *Othello.* It was there also that he acted a part which had never before been presented on any stage, that of an American negro. That was in a local farce, written by Sol Smith, called "The Tailor in Distress." It must have been during this engagement, also, that he first played *Corinthian Tom,* in "Tom and Jerry," by Pierce Egan, of which part he was the original representative in America.

The Globe Theatre, however, did not thrive, and that enterprise was soon relinquished. Forrest, accompanied by the Riddle family and some other players, then made a trip from Cincinnati, performing, as occasion served or could be made, in the small towns of Ohio. That was a time of hardship and trial to the adventurous young actor, and first and last he fell into straits of misfortune. Once, near the town of Dayton, he applied to a farmer for employment and was set at work sawing wood, by which means he earned something to eat and a little money for travelling expenses. Once he assumed the character of an itinerant preacher, and having delivered a sermon, in the alleged interest of a missionary cause, "took up a collection" from his hearers, and so relieved his pressing necessity. On one occasion he travelled, with his party of players, twenty-two miles on foot,—from Lebanon to Cincinnati, and then across the Ohio to Newport,—where the tired Thespians acted "Douglas" and "Miss in Her Teens," to an auditory that had paid only one dollar at the door. All

this while Forrest was enduring the rough weather of hard fortune and the preliminary drudgery, without which, in some form, there is no success in the actor's art. In the autumn of 1822 Forrest and his companions joined their old managers, Messrs. Collins and Jones, at Lexington, Kentucky, but those persons presently relinquished theatrical business, and Forrest then engaged himself to James H. Caldwell, of the American Theatre, New Orleans.

Sol Smith records that the young actor proposed to break this New Orleans engagement and stay with him at Lexington and that, because this rash, indiscreet proposal was declined, he went off in a pet, and procured employment in a circus, at a salary of twelve dollars a week. "By dint of hard lecturing and strong argument," adds Smith, "I finally prevailed on him to abandon his new profession." Forrest's first appearance in New Orleans, February 4, 1823, was made as *Jaffier,* in "Venice Preserved," and he remained in that city and its neighborhood for about two years. His way of life while he was there appears to have been somewhat loose and violent; he was less remarkable as an actor than as a reveller. When he came again to the North he drifted into Albany, where he obtained an engagement at the Albany Theatre, under the management of Charles Gilfert, who paid to him $7.50 a week. It was during this engagement that he succeeded in attracting the notice and approbation of Edmund Kean, to

whom he played second parts. It was during this engagement, also, that he made his second appearance in his native city. That was at the Walnut Street Theatre, where, for the benefit of C. S. Porter, he acted *Jaffier,* in "Venice Preserved." Three nights later he acted *Rolla,* in "Pizarro." Both those personations were much admired. Then came his first emphatic hit in New York. A friend of his,—Jacob Woodhull, of the Park Theatre, a capital all-round actor in his day,—was to have a benefit, and Forrest fortunately obtained an opportunity to act in it. The part that he chose for this first appearance at the leading theatre in the country was *Othello.* It was deemed an audacious presumption. Gilfert, fearing the worst of failure, strongly counselled him against the undertaking, and even went so far as to say that in case of an ensuing fiasco the actor would be discharged. Forrest, however, was not to be dissuaded or intimidated. On May 23, 1826, the performance, accordingly, took place. The house was full, and when the curtain dropped after the Third Act of the tragedy the new actor had won the first decisive success of his professional life.

The tide of favor then began to rise. Simpson immediately offered him an engagement, on excellent terms, at the Park; but Gilfert, who had just taken the Bowery Theatre, of which he was the first lessee, succeeded in securing him at that theatre, for a salary of $800 a year. The Bowery, under Gilfert's management,

was the scene of great triumphs for Forrest. Among the parts which he there represented, with extraordinary success, were *Damon, Jaffier, William Tell,* and *Marc Antony.* He remained there nearly three years; but at the death of Gilfert, in 1829, he accepted an engagement at the Park. It began October 17, in that year, when he appeared as *Damon.* At that theatre Forrest long enjoyed much popularity. It was there that he first acted *Metamora,* in John H. Stone's tragedy of "Metamora," produced December 15, 1829, and *Spartacus,* in Robert M. Bird's tragedy of "The Gladiator," produced September 26, 1831, both of which plays were written to fit his talents and peculiarities, and in both of which his acting was the perfection of physical realism.

Time passed, and the tragedian rose more and more in the estimation of hosts of New York admirers. In the summer of 1834 a company of citizens tendered to him the formal courtesy of a public banquet, and presented to him a gold medal, in token of their homage. That medal, designed by the artist Ingham and engraved by C. C. Durand, bore on one side a portrait of the actor, inscribed with the words

Histrioni optimo Edwino Forrest, viro præstanti;

and on the other a figure emblematic of Tragedy, with the words, from Shakespeare,

"Great in mouths of wisest censure."

Forrest was then in the prime of manhood and the first flush of popularity, a person remarkable for muscular force, a voice of prodigious volume and melody, and a cogent style of depicting the emotional experience of turbulent characters. He had, within a brief time, acquired an extraordinary vogue and distinction. The local stage, not then able to exult in much tragic talent distinctively American, proudly claimed for the American actor a rank equal with that of the best foreign representatives of tragedy. The local newspapers teemed with his praise. All the favoring gales of fortune, indeed, concurred to blow in one direction, and thus far the young actor sailed before the wind. When, therefore, Forrest went to England,—which he did in 1834,—it was natural that he should attract attention as a typical American actor. His reception in that country was such as might well have touched the heart and flattered the intellectual pride of an ambitious and sensitive man. He had made a trip through France, Italy, and Germany before entering England, and, on October 17, 1836, at Drury Lane, he appeared as *Spartacus,* in "The Gladiator." That performance stirred the theatrical public with a sensation different from any it had known before, because it offered an unprecedented union of enormous physical vigor with uncommon talent for tragic acting. Great popularity ensued, and Forrest became a lion of the hour. He received, at that time, especially kind treat-

ment at the hands of William Charles Macready and from other persons eminent in the profession of the Stage. Many and pleasant tokens of courtesy were also extended to him by members of the literary craft. Talfourd presided at a dinner which the Garrick Club tendered to the American actor, and Charles Kemble and Stephen Price gave to him swords which had once been the property, respectively, of John Kemble, Edmund Kean, and Talma. That period was, probably, the happiest in Forrest's life—though, had his nature been gentle, his ambition noble, and his conduct pure, it would have been, there is good reason to think, only the joyful dawn of a long day of ever-increasing happiness.

An event then occurred which was destined to shape and color all the rest of his career. This was his meeting with Catherine Norton Sinclair, daughter of the vocalist John Sinclair, whom he wooed and won, and to whom he was married,—in the old church in Covent Garden, London, the Rev. Henry Hart Milman, the author of "Fazio," performing the service,—on June 23, 1837. The meeting and the marriage had been predicted before Forrest left America. There was every reason to suppose that the union would prove a happy one; but, twelve years later, it ended in a separation, in misery to both parties, in a bitter strife between their friends and adherents, and in distressful

counter-suits at law betwixt husband and wife, which were the fruitful source of scandal.

Soon after their marriage Forrest and his wife came to America, and the actor immediately made his professional reappearance at Philadelphia, and was welcomed with enthusiasm. A public banquet, given in his honor, in that city, at which the Hon. J. R. Ingersoll presided, emphasized the public greeting and indicated the pride and pleasure with which his prosperity and fame were generally recognized. From Philadelphia, still pursuing his triumph, Forrest proceeded to New York and appeared at the Park Theatre. The receipts at the box-office on the first three nights of that engagement amounted to $4,200. A specially important incident of his career, at this period, was the production of "Jack Cade," in which he played *Aylmere*—one of his most original and characteristic personations. That tragic drama was written for him by Robert T. Conrad, of Philadelphia, and it was first acted on May 24, 1841, at the Park Theatre, New York.

Forrest's second visit to London was made in 1845. His wife went with him, and they moved, at that time, in circles of the intellectual and polished society of the metropolis, and also of the Scotch capital, which they presently visited. Forrest acted at the Princess' Theatre, London. There Sheridan Knowles—so great was his satisfaction with Forrest's *Virginius*—played, by his own offer, the part of *Dentatus,* on the occasion of the

tragedian's benefit. There, also, it happened that the public hissed Forrest's performance of *Macbeth,*—one of the most erroneous personations that ever mistaken sincerity submitted as a serious effort in tragedy. The annoyance which befell Forrest, in this instance, he chose to attribute, without reason or justification, to the hostile machinations of Macready; and thereupon his conduct was such as might have been expected from a man overfreighted with selfishness, conceit, and an explosive temper, and deficient in dignity of character. Being in Edinburgh shortly afterward, where Macready was acting, he went to the theatre to see the English tragedian as *Hamlet,* stood conspicuously in a private box, and hissed him. This proceeding, childishly petulant even if there had been a good reason for it, naturally inspired disgust for the American actor. Forrest strove to justify himself by a letter to "The London Times," which, as first written, the editor of that journal declined to print—objecting to some abuse it contained of the respectable Edinburgh journal, "The Scotsman." Forrest having amended his epistle, so as to restrict it to the statement of his grievance, "The Times," ultimately published the composition. The sequel of these petty disturbances was tragic. Out of Forrest's vain and silly resentment of an imaginary wrong grew, in later days, the shocking and disgraceful Astor Place riot and massacre in New York. Macready came to America in the season of 1848-'49, making his third and last visit to this

country, and acted at the Astor Place Opera House, then managed by William Niblo and James Henry Hackett. The riot occurred on May 10, 1849. Macready acted *Macbeth.* A successful attempt to prevent him from finishing a performance of that part had been made, by riotous adherents of Forrest, on the night of May 8, but it was determined, by the respectable part of the play-going public, that Macready should have a chance to act unmolested the character of *Macbeth,* and hence the piece was immediately announced for repetition. Forrest was, at that time, fulfilling an engagement at the Broadway Theatre, from which place,—as there is reason to believe,—he promoted the outbreak of murderous rioting which ensued, in which, unquestionably, it was intended that Macready should be slain, and which ended in the killing of twenty-two persons and the wounding of thirty-six others, when the state militia (the Seventh Regiment of the National Guard, under General Sanford and Colonel Duryea) fired on the mob. The comedian Lester Wallack, long afterward, told me that he was present, in the multitude outside the Opera House, and was standing close to the northwest corner of the Cooper Institute building when the firing began, and added that when a bullet struck the wall of that building just above his head he deemed it judicious to make a rapid retreat and instantly departed from the place.

Hard on the heels of that riot came the domestic

dissension between Forrest and his wife. The course which he pursued, in a portion of his married life, is said to have been one of licentiousness and cruelty. The course that he followed in the matter of his domestic infelicity was, to an astonishing degree, ignoble, ruthless, and wicked. It is not an exaggeration to say that it alienated from him, at once and forever, the sympathy of the better classes of the people. He was neither reticent nor decent. The idea of privately bearing his private burdens seems never to have occurred to him. Another ache had arrived to the great Forrest, and another row must give it an adequate celebration. He brought against his wife the vilest of charges in the foulest of words. He threw to the winds all discretion and sense. The counter divorce suits went into court in 1852, and after the widest publicity of discussion and a liberal allowance of the law's delay they resulted in the wife's vindication. She obtained a divorce from her husband, forfeiting none of her honors and legal rights; and, surviving many wrongs and much suffering, she lived to cast the flower of pity and pardon on his grave. She died, in New York City, in 1891, and her grave is in the Silver Mount Cemetery, Staten Island.

Throughout that self-inflicted ordeal, and for long afterward, Forrest's conduct was that of an unreasoning brute. He kept up for years a theatrical scandal that was a public nuisance and a crying shame. He personally vituperated the lawyer Charles O'Conor. He

thrashed, for mere suspicion, the poet Nathaniel Parker Willis. He professionally ostracized and ruined George Jamieson. He tried to ostracize that good man and great actor, John Gilbert. No actor who did not espouse his cause could come into the same theatre with him. He threw off his best and most powerful friends. Once aroused, there was no end to his suspicion and no limit to his violent animosity. Those were facts of common knowledge among persons who knew Forrest and his time, and nothing can obliterate their discredit to him.

On January 9, 1852, Forrest,—riding on the storm,—appeared at the Broadway Theatre, and acted for sixty-nine successive nights, beginning and ending with *Damon*. After that time the story of his life concerns itself with a long series of professional engagements in different cities of the Union; with the accumulation of wealth; with the eliciting of extravagant praises and of equally extreme vituperation; with his castle of Fonthill on the banks of the Hudson, his mansion in Philadelphia, his theatrical library, his reclusive habits of living, his misanthropy, his frequent illness, and his gradual decline from active professional labor and the fashion of the passing age. His last engagement in New York began on February 6, 1871, and continued three weeks. He appeared at the Fourteenth Street Theatre as *Lear* and as *Richelieu*. A sudden illness afflicted him, and he was compelled abruptly to desist. His final appearances occurred

on the 19th and 22d of November, 1872, when at Steinway Hall, New York, he read from "Hamlet" and "Othello": fifteen days later he died.

Edwin Forrest was not a man whom it is desirable to canonize,—but the desire to do so was felt by many of his adherents during his lifetime, and it is manifest in the several biographies of him, by James Rees, Lawrence Barrett, and William Rounseville Alger, which have been published since his death. The tone of Forrest's mind was colored and the action of it was controlled, during the best part of his career, by animal excitement, and that excitement was curbed by no intellectual prudence. So wholly did he believe in himself and so entirely did he find the rude mob in sympathy with him that, until the shadows began to gather over his pathway, he never conceived the idea that he might ever be in the wrong. If he ever imagined a state of things that he could deem to be properly adjusted, Edwin Forrest was its centre. In youth and early manhood he was boisterous, sensual, revengeful, and profligate. In age he was misanthropical. He was capable of good impulses and kind actions, but the impulses were often checked by distrust, and the actions were often prompted and moulded by selfish aims. His vanity was prodigious. He thought himself the greatest of actors and of men. The least expression of dissent from his opinion, or of disapproval of what he had said or done, would sting him into an outburst of fury or madden him to a long

fit of sullen resentment. The idea that under any conceivable circumstances his powers could decay or his reputation decline filled him with wrathful dismay. Caricature of himself, no matter how delicate or how comic, he could not endure. His personal peculiarities were to be held sacred, and no one must laugh at them; yet, unhappily, some of them were among the most laughable of comic attributes. Of self-poise, conscious rectitude, patience, and submission he did not possess a particle. Nor was his intellect broad enough to afford him consolation under the wounds that his vanity often received. All his resource was to shut himself up in a kind of feudal retreat and grim seclusion, where he brooded upon himself as a great genius misunderstood, and upon the rest of the world as a sort of animated scum. That was an unlovely nature; but mingled in it were the comprehension and the incipient love of goodness, sweetness, beauty, and beneficent ideas. He vaguely knew what he had missed, whether of intellectual grandeur, moral excellence, or the happiness of the affections, and in the solitude of his spirit he brooded upon his misery. The sense of this commended him to sympathy when he was living and it commends his memory to respect.

Both nature and fortune were kind to Edwin Forrest. He had a splendid physical constitution, rare qualities of temperament, and mental faculties of a more than common worth. His lot was cast in a country where

it is possible for the poor to rise. The hardships that befell him came in youth, at a time of life when hardships can best be borne and when they are of the most service; nor were they more severe than such as have been met and overcome by hundreds of other men, often less fitted than he was to conquer them. He had scarcely reached early manhood before he attracted the admiring attention of the public, in a pursuit which was congenial to him, and for which he was fitted; and after that he speedily acquired both fame and wealth. The honors that he coveted were not withheld. Although there were always persons who neither admired, nor liked, nor praised him, no man in America ever attracted larger crowds of followers, or elicited more copious and emphatic adulation. He was married to a handsome and accomplished gentlewoman, one who had mind and tact as well as manners and beauty. He possessed affectionate and loyal friends,—such as James Oakes,—who stood by him, with unshaken fondness and fidelity, as long as they lived. He reached a professional position where he could command his own terms. He suffered from no lack of organs of public opinion to celebrate, expound, or defend him. There was no reason, outside of himself, why he should not have lived a triumphant and happy life. Yet his existence was a tempest and his career a magnificent failure.

The wreck of Forrest's life was mainly the result of Forrest's character. Hard and bitter circumstances,

once created, of course reacted upon him, but, in the main, it was his character that created them. In youth he revolted against wholesome discipline. In manhood he revolted against culture, the restraints of good breeding and right social custom, the duty of consideration for other persons, the supremacy of spiritual law, and even those iron dictates of destiny which, for each individual, flow out of personality. He was constitutionally savage and always in rebellion. It has been said of him that he was "born to rule and be obeyed,"—but no man can ever be fit to rule others who cannot rule himself. Forrest was always the slave of his ignorance, passion, and prejudice, and was always in a fume over his limitations. He had knowledge enough to know that there is such a thing as learning, and he resented, with fierce irritation, the nevertheless irrefutable fact that this was possessed by others and was not possessed by him. He believed himself to be a man of genius, but to his mind this meant that he was unlike other men, and superior to them, and therefore ordained and privileged to dominate everything. The actor temperament, in the nature of things selfish, was in him selfishness incarnate. He recognized neither fault in his character nor error in his conduct. He either could not or would not subject himself to restraint. In adversity he was not humble; in prosperity he was not modest. Toward his professional associates, unless he liked them or unless he was met with unabashed spirit, his demeanor was often arro-

gant, tyrannical, and offensive. He liked to manifest despotic authority and to make the weak tremble. He could, indeed, be magnanimous, loving, and kind,—for he was human and had warmth as well of the affections as of the passions,—and it is known that he did gentle, charitable acts. (This has been denied—but it is true.) But he was proud and self-assertive, and he was ravenous of praise, money, and power. Love for the dramatic art, at first an instinct, soon became, in him, a vain appetite, and he loved it because it was a means of personal glorification. His first thought was ever of his own vast and overwhelming self: nothing like self-government, nothing like philosophic submission, nothing like humble acceptance appeared in any important moment of his life: and the inevitable consequence was misery. No man can be deemed a great character whose dominant purpose in conduct is the announcement, aggrandizement, and celebration of himself, or who, in the patient, thorough, far-seeing pursuit of duty, is incapable of foregoing, easily and cheerfully, the praise of other men. Had mankind been made up of melodious flunkeys, with their trumpets well polished and in a state of everlasting toot, Forrest would, probably, have been content. As it was, he continued, to the last, growling over the idea that something had been withheld from him that the world ought to have given. He was a great man, and somebody had said that he was not. He was the greatest actor that ever lived, and

some scurrilous newspaper had denied it. He was *Timon* scowling along Broadway; he was *Lear* parading in Chestnut Street; and the miserable human race would not be awed by the spectacle. There was always a fly in his ointment, a Mordecai at his gate, sullen resentment in his heart, and scorn on his lips. Such a man is picturesque as a ruin and becomes a study for the curious, but he is far from being either noble or salutary. Such a character, perhaps, is more to be pitied than blamed, but such is not the kind of character for which the reverence of the world can successfully be invoked. When a man poses as a genius and a martyr, and invites the admiration and sympathy of the world, the world is likely to inquire what he has done and what ails him. Byron, gloomily sequestered in his Venetian palace and consumed at heart with the strife between his inherent goodness and his inherent evil, had at least written "Childe Harold," "Manfred," and "Cain." Those are immortal productions, destined to impress the human mind as long as time shall endure. Forrest added no such treasure to the store of human benefits, even in his pursuit of the Stage.

It is to the credit of Forrest that he did not forget kind treatment. He remembered, for example, his early friend and manager, William Jones, as a benefactor, and manifested toward him, in after years, a practical gratitude, giving him shelter and bounty when these were greatly needed. The early days of adventure

in the West and South were full of hardship for Forrest, and he appreciated keenly and remembered long whatever friendliness was then extended to him,—a stranger and a struggling novice. It was in Forrest's house in New York, in 1841, that Jones suffered his last sickness and passed away. Another man to whom Forrest was kind was John Augustus Stone, over whose grave in Philadelphia (where he died, a suicide, June 1, 1834) stands a monument inscribed with these words: "In Memory of the Author of 'Metamora'; By His Friend E. Forrest." The actor's best friend,—next to James Oakes,—was William Leggett, whose death, not long after they became attached comrades, bereaved him of a wise adviser, an appreciative admirer, an intellectual prop, a frank and fearless censor, and a companion whose influence was always for his good.

It has often been said of Forrest that he was a melodramatic actor. He was not; he was a tragedian. His *Othello,* his *Virginius,* and, in later years, his *King Lear* were the sufficient proof of this. He had imagination,—though it was seldom informed by fine intelligence and never by spirituality,—and he had passion and tenderness. Even in *Spartacus,* the gladiator, though the method was melodramatic, there was a noble assumption of tender and manly attributes, which dwarfed the physical ebullitions. That which marred his acting, to the judicious, was that which marred his character,—his colossal, animal selfishness. His impulses, aided by physical

strength, manly beauty, and natural talent, impelled him,—over many obstacles and much hardship,—to prosperity and precarious eminence, but they did not conduct him to greatness. His nature fulfilled itself, and for that reason his life was a failure. It was this which made him a pathetic object. He was never able, as a matter of destiny, to reach the goal which, nevertheless, he vaguely saw. To a man of susceptive temperament, picturesque attributes, and a heart capable of suffering, that was a sad fate. It resulted not by reason of what he did but by reason of what he was,—a vast animal, bewildered by a grain of genius.

Forrest's physical attributes determined his course. He directly inherited the traditions of Cooke and Cooper, and his method and style were founded on the latter, modified by the influence of Edmund Kean, becoming (as is the case with all actors) distinctive as he matured. As an actor Forrest, at his best, was remarkable for iron repose, perfect precision of method, immense physical force, capacity for leonine banter, fiery ferocity, and occasional felicity of elocution in passages of monotone and colloquy. Strength and definiteness are always comprehensible and generally admirable. Forrest was the union of both. He resembled, in this, a rugged old tower, conspicuous in a landscape. The architecture may not be admired, but the building is distinctly seen and known. You might not like the actor, but you could not help seeing that he was the

From an Engraving by George Bannister. *In the Collection of the Author.*

EDWIN FORREST
as
Metamora, in "Metamora."

bold representative of a certain set of ideas in art. But while Forrest illustrated the value of earnestness and of assured skill, he also illustrated the law of classification in art as well as in humanity. Mankind,—artists among the rest,—are distinctly classified. We are what we are. Each man develops along his own grade. Hence the world's continual wrangling over representative men,—wrangling between persons of different classes, who can never become of one mind. Forrest was continually the theme of that sort of controversy. He represented the physical element in art. He was a landmark on the border-line between physical and spiritual power. Natures kindred with his own admired him, followed him, and reverenced him, as the finest type of artist. That was natural and inevitable. But there is another sort of nature, with which neither Forrest nor his admirers could sympathize,—that asks continually for some great spiritual hero and leader; that has crowned and uncrowned many false monarchs; and that must forever hopelessly pursue its ideal. This nature feels what Shelley felt when he wrote of "the desire of the moth for the star." To persons of this order,—and they are sufficiently numerous to constitute a large minority,—Forrest's peculiar interpretations of character and passion were unsatisfactory. They admired his certainty of touch, his profound assurance, his solid symmetry, but they felt that something was wanting to complete the artist.

They did not belong to his audience, and they were as much out of place in listening to him as a congregation of Methodist theologians would have been listening to Emerson. He had nothing to say to them. He was great in his way, they perceived, but, like the Gallic wit, they also perceived that his way was small. To his natural admirers, on the contrary, he was great in his way, and his way was the greatest of ways. Those two parties long assailed and defended him: fruitlessly,—because this kind of dispute cannot, in nature, come to an end or even to a compromise. The respect wherein Forrest was peculiar, the distinguishing excellence that gave him his victory and made him memorable, was a puissant animal splendor and ground-swell of emotion. He was tremendously real. He could be seen and heard and understood. He had a grand body and a glorious voice, and in moments of simple passion he affected the senses like the blare of trumpets and clash of cymbals, or like the ponderous, slow-moving, crashing, and thundering surges of the sea. In that quality he stood alone. In all others he has been surpassed. That was his charm, and through that he was enabled to render whatever service he did render to the cause of the Drama. That service consisted in a widespread, delightful, and improving interpretation of the art of acting to the lower order of public intelligence. To the higher order of mind Forrest was superfluous, and of this fact he seemed, in a certain blind way, to be aware,—although neither

he nor any of his adherents could understand and believe that it was possible for any person, honestly and without hostility or prejudice, to dislike the snorts and grunts, the brays and belches, the gaspings and gurglings, the protracted pauses, the lolling tongue and the stentorian roar, with all of which ornaments it pleased him to overlay his acting,—often remarkably fine and sometimes great. In acting, as in poetry, there are, popularly, two schools. The one is all for spirit; the other is all for body. The eclectic school, which is the right school,—in acting and in every other art,—stands between those extremes and simply asks the harmonious, symmetrical blending of the spiritual and physical. England saw it in Garrick and Kemble; America enjoyed it in Edwin Booth and Henry Irving. Neither of those latter actors equalled Forrest in his distinctive element, but each excelled him in fine mentality, spirituality, and poetry.

IX.

GEORGE W. JAMIESON.

1810—1868.

On Tuesday afternoon, October 6, 1868, in the village of Yonkers, friends of George W. Jamieson assembled in the church of St. John to perform funeral rites over his remains and to lay them in the grave. The day was uncommonly sweet and beautiful—a peaceful autumn day, a day for sad thought and sadder parting. The mourners around the coffin of Jamieson, though not numerous, were sincere; and his poor, bruised body was tenderly laid at rest by hands that in life he loved to grasp. He could not have wished a different funeral. His attachments, while living, were few, and no man could entertain a stronger aversion than was felt by him for the pretence of friendship or the vanity of ostentation. Suddenly and terribly his life came to an end. Sadly and simply his remains were borne to their place of final repose. His grave is in a little cemetery near Yonkers. There he rests, after years of toil and of weary waiting, embittered by disappointment, sorrow, poverty, the wreck of high hopes, and the wintry chill of unsuccessful age. There the grass grows green

and the birds sing above him, in a peace that his lifetime never knew.

Jamieson was born in Varick Street, New York, in 1810. His mother was an American, of remarkable talents, and from her he inherited his extraordinary skill in mimetic art. His father was an Irishman, of strong individuality and notable independence of character,—qualities that reappeared in his son. The boy was taught to read and to write, and that was all; yet in mature life he was a man of liberal culture, and as a Shakespeare scholar he held a high rank. At an early age he was apprenticed to a lapidary, and in cutting gems he acquired facility,—his cameos being considered models of artistic beauty and truth. In early manhood he went to Washington, where he made many excellent cameo portraits—of Henry Clay, and of other distinguished men—and where he became a favorite, both as a man and an artist. His taste and desire, however, impelled him toward the Stage, and for that profession he studied and practised assiduously in several amateur dramatic societies. His first regular professional appearance was made at the Bowery Theatre, New York, under the management of Hamblin, in 1835, in his own farce, "The Chameleon." His success was good and he remained an actor all his days. He was engaged at the National Theatre (Church Street, New York), in 1839; he appeared in Philadelphia for the first time on October 9, 1840; and he made a pro-

fessional visit to England in 1861. At one time he played opposite parts to the elder Booth and to Edwin Forrest. His *Iago* was his best Shakespearean impersonation, although he also played *Othello* well, and he was a superb reader of *Hamlet:* but he did not make a name as a Shakespearean actor. In later years he played "character" parts, such as *Pete* in "The Octoroon," and *Steve Hargrave, the Softy,* in "Aurora Floyd." The latter performance was given at Niblo's, in April, 1863, and it was greeted with critical and popular applause, as a faithful and harrowing portrait of a semi-idiotic wretch. In November of the same year Jamieson played an engagement at the Olympic, where two of his dramas were produced—" There's No Such Word As Fail," and "As You Sow, You Must Reap." The former is a neatly finished and wittily written piece, and the author played in it with vivacity and refinement as an Irish gentleman. In "As You Sow" he played *Moses Mole,* a detective officer. That drama did not succeed. (It contains one strong character,—*Dr. Deadly Nightshade,*—in which James H. Stoddart made a hit.) His last professional appearance was made in Yonkers, where he resided for several years and was highly esteemed, and where he met an awful fate. The express train on the Hudson River Railroad that left New York on Saturday evening, October 3, bore with it his death. He had gone on an earlier train and been carried beyond the Yonkers station and landed

at Glenwood, whence he walked back on the railway line. The express met him when he was within a few hundred yards of safety. He was instantly killed. He could not have known a moment of pain. But it is inexpressibly sad to think that a man so gifted, who had suffered so much, should have perished in such a way. Overhead the stars shone faintly down. Near by flowed the noble river. He was alone with the darkness and with his thoughts. He was already marked off from among the living. It may be hoped that, in those solemn moments, he forgave his enemies, as they must forgive him. To one shadow that was cast upon his life, and that did him great harm,—his alleged complicity in the domestic troubles of Edwin Forrest,—a passing allusion will suffice. He spoke of it to me, and declared himself innocent; and I believe him to have spoken the truth. He had faults, and they marred his character and hurt his fortunes. He had great pride of intellect; his convictions were rigid; he was not free from passionate prejudice; his impetuous irritability sometimes perplexed his judgment; his independence of character was incapable of policy; he espoused unpopular doctrines if they happened to suit his humor; he was emphatically a man for the few,—not the many. He attained local repute and he lived to see it slip from his grasp and to find himself greatly misunderstood, and he became embittered. But there were hours when the clouds lifted

and the fine spirit found ample play in the happy intercourse of social life. In the tumult of active life the great world has rushed onward past his memory, as the fatal train rushed onward past his lifeless body; but,—as I knew him long and well, and have not forgotten his worth, his sorrow, and his melancholy fate,—it should be mine to recall his virtues and record and lament his untimely end.

X.

JOHN BROUGHAM.

1810—1880.

The life of the comedian John Brougham, notable for many things, was especially remarkable for two qualities—brilliancy and goodness. Fifty years of it he passed on the stage; and, both as actor and author, his influence tended to gladden and sweeten the human experience of which he was a part. The reason of this was that within the actor and author there was a true man. His heart was large, warm, and charitable; his mind was eager, hopeful, cheerful, and actively creative; his instincts were virtuous and kindly; his temperament was gentle; and his consideration for others,—which extended to the humblest of living creatures, was thoughtful of the most minute point of delicacy, found excuse for every fault, and gave forgiveness for almost every wrong,—sprang from the spontaneous desire that everybody should be happy. His thoughts, and often his talk, dwelt upon the great disparity of conditions in society, the struggles and sufferings of the poor, and the relation of evil to the infirmities of human nature. He did not live for himself alone, but he was pro-

foundly and practically interested in others; and that feeling, as potent as it was genuine, animated all his life, colored all his work, and so commended him to the responsive sympathy and good-will of his generation that his name, on every lip, was the name of a friend.

In his writings as in his acting the characteristic quality of Brougham was off-hand dash and glittering merriment, a commingling of bluff, breezy humor with winning manliness. The atmosphere of his art was always that of sincerity, but it never had the insipidity of mere goodness. He was intellectual, and at times poetic and romantic; but he was human, he was gay, and he loved to adorn life with the Celtic sparkle. His rich, rolling voice, with a touch of the brogue in it, sounds in all he wrote, and his happy, infectious laughter, for all who recall his acting, will echo in memory as long as they live. The scope and variety of his labors were great. He threw himself with the keenest zest into the passing moment; he dreaded no task; he shunned no emergency; he attempted all sorts of composition, to which either his agile fancy impelled him, or which the need of the hour exacted; and, while he was not equally successful in every line of literature or every walk of the Stage, he produced an astonishing number of effective dramas, and he acted many and diversified parts in an admirable manner. During the first twenty years of his life, which were passed

in and around the city of Dublin, where he was born May 9, 1810, he was provided with opportunities of liberal education; and those he improved, acquiring knowledge, however, as he said of himself, rather by absorption than application; and all his life he was a reader and a student; so that his labors were based on a solid foundation of good mental discipline. In other words, he was a scholar, and the operations of his mind, however impulsive and erratic they sometimes may have been, were usually guided and restrained by that knowledge of the intellectual field and that sense of proportion and harmony, of fitness and of taste, which only scholarship can give.

He began life as a student of surgery, and for several months walked the Peter Street Hospital, Dublin; but a sudden stroke of adversity deprived him of the prospect of fortune and threw him upon his own resources, and he thereupon went to London, and presently became an actor. That was an accident; for, when destitute of money, he had offered himself as a cadet in the East India Company's service, and had been restrained from enlisting only by the recruiting officer,—a stranger, but a kind old man,—who gave him a guinea and urged him to seek some other and fitter employment. A chance meeting with an old acquaintance, within an hour or two after that incident occurred, led to his engagement at what was then the Tottenham Street Theatre, afterward the Prince of

Wales's; and there, in July, 1830, acting six characters in the rough play of "Tom and Jerry," he began that sparkling professional career which now is only a memory. In 1831 he was a member of the company organized by Mme. Vestris for the London Olympic, and his name appears in the cast of "Olympic Revels" (*Mars,* Mr. Brougham), in the first full bill issued by that manager. From the Olympic he made professional trips in the English provinces, and played all sorts of parts. His first play was written at that time, and was a burlesque, prepared for William Evans Burton, who then was acting in London, at the Pavilion Theatre. When Mme. Vestris removed from the Olympic to Covent Garden, Brougham followed her thither, and there he remained as long as Vestris and Charles Mathews were at the head of the theatre; and it was while there that (as he always claimed) he co-operated with Dion Boucicault in writing the comedy of "London Assurance."

In 1840 he became manager of the London Lyceum, which he conducted during summer seasons, and he wrote, for production at that house, "Life in the Clouds," "Love's Livery," "Enthusiasm," "Tom Thumb the Second," and, in conjunction with Mark Lemon, "The Demon Gift."

His American career began in 1842, when, as *O'Callaghan,* in "His Last Legs," he came forward at the Park Theatre, in New York. Those days, he said,

were "the palmy days of light houses and heavy gas-bills." A starring tour of the country followed, and, incidentally, the comedian lost all his earnings, while endeavoring, aboard a Mississippi River steamboat, to learn the national game of poker. A little later he was employed in Burton's company in New York, and for Burton he wrote "Bunsby's Wedding," "The Confidence Man," "Don Cæsar de Bassoon," "Vanity Fair," "The Irish Yankee," "Benjamin Franklin," "All's Fair in Love," "The Irish Emigrant," and a play on "Dombey and Son." Later he managed Niblo's Garden, producing there his fairy tale called "Home," and the play of "Ambrose Germain," written for Mlle. Blangy. On December 23, 1850, he opened Brougham's Lyceum, in Broadway, near the southwest corner of Broome Street; while there he wrote "The World's Fair," "Faustus," "The Spirit of Air," "Row at the Lyceum," a dramatization of "David Copperfield," and a new version of "The Actress of Padua," the latter for Charlotte Cushman. The demolition of the building next to his theatre, however, made it appear to be unsafe, and so his business, which had begun well, was seriously injured; and he always said that the treachery of a false friend took that property out of his hands and left him burdened with debt,—all of which, however, he subsequently paid. In theatrical management he was invariably unfortunate.

From the Lyceum,—which afterward became Wal-

lack's Theatre, and so remained till 1860,—he went to the Bowery (July 7, 1856), where he revived "King John," with superb scenery by Henry Hilliard, and with a cast that included Edward Loomis Davenport, Mrs. Davenport, William Wheatley, J. B. Howe, and Kate Reignolds; but that did not succeed, and he then wrote and produced a large number of "sensation" dramas, among which were "The Pirates of the Mississippi," "The Red Mask,"—based on a current tale called "The Gun-Maker of Moscow,"—"Orion, the Gold Beater," "Tom and Jerry in America," and "The Miller of New Jersey." He then accepted employment in Wallack's company, and, for "the veteran's" theatre, wrote "The Game of Love," a version of "Bleak House"; "My Cousin German," "A Decided Case," "The Game of Life," the burlesque of "Pocahontas," "Neptune's Defeat," "Love and Murder," "Romance and Reality," "The Ruling Passion," and "Playing with Fire." After several seasons at Wallack's he rejoined Burton,—then at the Metropolitan Theatre, formerly Tripler Hall, and finally the Winter Garden, in Broadway, nearly opposite to Bond Street,—and there he produced his burlesque of "Columbus," "This House To Be Sold," and several other plays. In September, 1860, he went to England, where he remained five years. While there he adapted from the French, for Charles Fechter, "The Duke's Motto" and "Bel Demonio," and wrote, for Miss Her-

bert, dramatic versions of "Lady Audley's Secret" and "Only a Clod." He also wrote "While There's Life There's Hope," acted at the Strand; "The Might of Right," acted at Astley's; "The Golden Dream," produced at Manchester; the words of three operas: "Blanche de Nevers," "The Demon Lovers," and "The Bride of Venice"; several songs and poems, and several pieces of music, one of which, "The Bob-o'-Link Polka," subsequently became popular. His comedy of "Playing with Fire" was produced at the Princess' Theatre, and he acted there, and also at the Lyceum. His reappearance in America was effected on October 30, 1865, at the Winter Garden Theatre, and he never afterward went abroad. He acted in a round of parts at that time, beginning with *Dr. Savage,* in "Playing with Fire," and continuing with *Foxglove,* in his own "Flies in the Web"; *Powhatan, Columbus,* and *McShane,* in "The Nervous Man and the Man of Nerve," and he concluded the engagement, which lasted three months, with his drama of "O'Donnell's Mission," in which he acted *Roderick O'Donnell.*

In February, 1867, a new piece by Brougham, entitled "The Christian Martyrs," was produced at Barnum's Museum, and in May of the same year he filled a brief engagement at the Olympic, appearing as *O'Donnell, Captain Cuttle, Micawber,* and *Powhatan.* In the following August he again played there, and at the same time his drama of "Little Nell and the Marchioness,"

written for Lotta (Miss Charlotte Crabtree), was brought out at Wallack's Theatre, August 14, 1867. In the summer of 1868 he produced, at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, "Hearts; or, The Serpents of Society," and on June 8, in that year, he brought forward, at Wallack's Theatre, his melodrama of "The Lottery of Life," and himself acted the chief part. That piece had a run of nine weeks. In December, that year, his play of "The Emerald Ring," written for Barney Williams, was produced at the Broadway Theatre,—Wallack's old house,—which Williams then managed. On January 25, 1869, he opened Brougham's Theatre, on the site of the building which subsequently was the Madison Square Theatre, with a comedy by himself, called "Better Late Than Never,"—in which he acted *Major Fergus O'Shaughnessy,*—and "The Dramatic Review for 1868." He afterward produced an adaptation called "Irish Stew," and his capital burlesque, in which he acted *Shylock,* entitled "Much Ado About a Merchant of Venice." That theatre was taken out of his hands by its unscrupulous owner, James Fiske, Jr., and on April 3 Brougham closed his season with a performance of "His Last Legs." On April 4 a banquet in his honor was given at the Astor House, and on May 18 he received a farewell benefit—performances occurring at the house which is now called the Fourteenth Street Theatre, and at Niblo's. The attempt to establish Brougham's Theatre was his final effort

in management. After that time he was connected with various stock companies, but chiefly with Daly's Theatre and with Wallack's. Among his later works were "The Red Light," in which he acted at Wallack's Theatre, June 6, 1870; "Minnie's Luck," produced at the same house; "John Garth," given at Wallack's, December 12, 1871; "The Lily of France," brought out December 16, 1872, at Booth's Theatre, by Miss Helen Temple, who acted *Joan of Arc;* "Slander" and "Good-Bye," in which he made his last professional tour of the country, in the fall of 1877.

In 1852 Brougham edited a comic paper in New York, called "The Lantern," and he published two collections of his miscellaneous writings, entitled "A Basket of Chips" and "The Bunsby Papers." On January 17, 1878, he received a testimonial benefit at the Academy of Music, at which the sum of $10,278.56 was received; and that fund, after payment of the incidental expenses, was settled on him, in an annuity,—which expired at his death. The desire and design of his friends, in the arrangement then made, was to insure his protection from want, in his old age. He had begun, at my earnest request, the composition of an "Autobiography," but he left it unfinished. His last work was a drama entitled "Home Rule," in which he treated political and social affairs in Ireland. His last appearance on the stage was made as *Felix O'Reilly,* a detective, in Dion Boucicault's play of "Rescued,"

at Booth's Theatre, New York, October 25, 1879. His death occurred on June 7, 1880, at No. 60 East Ninth Street, New York, and his grave was made in Greenwood Cemetery.

The record of Brougham's life is indicative of the current of his career, the great vitality and industry by which it was marked, and the variable fortune with which it was crowned. Actors, more than most of the persons who live by their efforts in the realm of art, are necessarily affected by the immediate influences of their time. Their characters, in other words, are, to a considerable extent, bent and moulded by public opinion and caprice. They feel the necessity of the instant response, and, accordingly, they are not slow to make that direct appeal in which very often there is more of impulse than of judgment, the tinsel of artifice rather than the pure gold of art. Brougham, like many of his contemporaries, recognized this necessity; but his sincerity of feeling, his sturdiness, his scholar-like taste, and his intense loyalty to the higher principles and best ideals of art were all combined in antagonism to worldly prudence and expediency; and throughout the story of his life it is easy to trace not merely a roving, drifting, careless disposition,—the light-hearted heedlessness and yielding amiability of Goldsmith, whom, in some ways he resembled,—but the resolute bent of a mind that spontaneously insisted on going its own way and fulfilling its own laws. There was,

indeed, in his intellectual endeavor, no continuity of movement toward a definite goal, clearly seen afar off; but he was born to be a man of letters, a poetic artist, and a wit, and he could not, except in a fitful manner, take his cue from his circumstances. His experience, therefore, was often that of conflict with prevailing fashions, and, toward the last, of considerable spiritual discontent.

The fact that fortune always, sooner or later, slipped through his fingers was, doubtless, ascribable chiefly to his buoyant Hibernian recklessness of the ordinary precautions of prudence and to his heedless trust in everybody. His adaptation of "The Duke's Motto" for Fechter had a prosperous career in London; but, as he told me, all that he ever received for his work on it was a box of cigars; and with transactions of that kind his whole business career was spangled. But, even with a harder temperament, he would still have been at odds with the practical spirit of his time. He had originality as a man, even more than as a writer, and he was often a dreamer in the midst of the battle. Those of his dramatic works in which he took the most pleasure, and in which the student will hereafter discern the most of the man, are the burlesque of "Columbus," the blank-verse drama of "The Lily of France," and the comedy of "Playing with Fire." They contain delicate thought, poetic suggestion, sweet-tempered satire, contemplative philosophy, and pathos. He was

a pensive moralist, a poetic dreamer, a delicate, sensitive gentleman, as frank as a child, and as gentle as a woman.

As an actor Brougham excelled in humor, and was at his best in the expression of comically eccentric character. Among the parts that memory associates with his name, are *Stout,* in "Money"; *Dennis Brulgruddery,* in "John Bull"; *Sir Lucius O'Trigger,* in "The Rivals"; *Cuttle, Micawber, Bagstock; O'Grady,* in "Arrah-na-Pogue"; *Dazzle,* in "London Assurance"; *Captain Murphy Maguire,* in "The Serious Family," and *O'Callaghan,* in "His Last Legs." His animal spirits, dash, vigor, and brilliancy in those parts were great; he entered deeply into their spirit; he could be consciously joyous or unconsciously droll; he was not for an instant out of the stage picture; and he spoke the language with delicious purity. He gave an immense amount of pleasure; he did no harm; he went to his grave in the fulness of years and honors; some of his works have lived after him, in the usage of the Stage and the admiration of the public; and he was deeply mourned; no one who ever knew him can speak, without a sigh, the name of John Brougham.

His talk of old times was interesting, full of anecdote, and various with sketches of character, witty comment, and professional learning. He had seen Munden, Liston, and many other fine actors of the old school. He knew Charles Mathews in his youth, and

could have traced the whole growth of that sparkling mind and vigorous career, which finally became so famous. He saw the incidents which attended Sir Walter Scott's last sojourn in London, when that intellectual giant was forced to pause there, as he was going home to die. He was familiar with the last days of Campbell and Rogers, and contemporary with the opening careers of both Dickens and Thackeray. He was the comrade of Dion Boucicault when that author was little more than a boy. His memories of the Kembles and the Keans were distinct, and his descriptions of Macready and of Charles Kean in particular,—with both of whom he had acted, and for both of whom he had managed the stage,—were remarkably humorous and not a little pungent with drollery. To hear his account of a performance by Charles Kean, with all the persons around the stage wearing list slippers, was to realize a truthful and instructive picture and to enjoy a complete exhilaration. He possessed an unerring faculty of mimicry; in excellence of theatrical anecdote there has been no one like him since George Jamieson and John Sefton; and in the simulation of unconsciously comic attributes he did not leave an equal among actors, aside from Frank Chanfrau and Joseph Jefferson.

He touched many styles, but, although he lived in the library and maintained and cherished a high ideal of what the literary artist should strive to accomplish, he had neither the erudite prosiness nor the exclusive

isolation of the abstract scholar: he lived also in the world and with the life of his time. He clasped the hands of men and women; he spoke to their hearts; he was interested in their fortunes; "their welfare pleased him and their cares distrest"; and wherever he went he carried the benediction of good deeds and left the sunshine of love and laughter. Those persons who heard his offhand speeches before the curtain can call to mind what a ring of genuine kindness there was in his voice, what a light of geniality there was in his face, what a glow of animal spirits he diffused around him, what a winning ideal of manliness he suggested,—by his native elegance of bearing and the breezy heartiness and joyous dash of his manners. Those who were brought near to him in the business of life do not forget his thoughtful consideration, his delicate courtesy, his simple goodness. The poor had cause to bless him, though himself was poor. As he lay in his coffin, his noble face, grand in the awful serenity of death, was like the face of Shakespeare. The light, the merriment, the trouble, the pain, were all gone, and nothing but the majesty remained; and, looking on him there, I thought of Shakespeare's words:

> "Our cause of sorrow
> Must not be measured by his worth, for then
> It hath no end."

XI.

JOHN GILBERT.

1810—1889.

THE death of John Gilbert (June 17, 1889, at Boston), although an event rationally to be expected—for he was close on eighty years of age—came upon the community with a peculiar sense of grief. The actor, the gentleman, the friend had lived with us a long time and had become entwined with precious memories and associations. The grand figures with which we have been familiar are vanishing, one by one. The institutions and the ways of our personal world are breaking up around us. New men and new ideas and interests are thrusting aside the broken fragments of our past. The shadows darken around us. A little later we shall be shadows ourselves. The death of John Gilbert marked an epoch in the experience of the generation that is passing away—solemnly warning it of its own decline. It marked also an epoch in the history of the American Stage; for John Gilbert had been an actor for close on sixty-one years, and within his time the art of acting (exemplifying its customary periodicity of flow and ebb) had reached its flood, and had begun to recede.

John Gibbs Gilbert was a native of Boston, born February 27, 1810. His birth occurred in a house in Richmond Street, next to that in which Charlotte Cushman was born, and those two—afterward famous as actors—were playmates in childhood. Gilbert went on the stage in his nineteenth year, making his first appearance, November 28, 1828, at the Tremont Theatre, Boston. The play was Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," and Gilbert acted *Jaffier*. The *Belvidera* was Mary Duff, an actress as eminent in her day as Cushman and Ristori were in a later time, and worthy to be remembered with the most illustrious of dramatic artists. His next characters were *Sir Edward Mortimer,* in "The Iron Chest," and *Shylock*. He continued for the rest of the season of 1828 to act at the Tremont Theatre, taking all parts that were cast to him, but in the fall of that year he joined the company at the Camp Street Theatre, New Orleans, under Caldwell's management, and during the ensuing five years he acted with that company, sometimes in New Orleans, sometimes in towns on the Mississippi River—playing all sorts of parts, but gradually drifting into the line of old men. On his return to Boston, in 1834, he again came forward at the Tremont Theatre, acting *Mr. Dornton,* in "The Road to Ruin." The occasion was that of a benefit to George Barrett—a favorite comedian of that epoch. The Tremont was then managed by Thomas Barry, who died on February 11, 1876, full of years

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JOHN GILBERT

as

Sir Anthony Absolute, in "The Rivals."

and honors. Gilbert was at once engaged there, and there he remained for the next five years. His line of parts then comprised tragedy as well as comedy, but his tendency was toward the specialty of "first old men"—in which for many years he had no equal and scarcely a rival. Blake was the only actor of his time who ever surpassed him in that line, and Blake could excel him only in certain unctuous parts or parts of great tenderness. The versatility of his talents and the variety of his efforts at that time are denoted by the list of parts which he acted during the first season with Barry. This includes *Master Walter, Isaac of York, Sir Peter Teazle, Pizarro, Iago, Sir Edward Mortimer, Admiral Kingston, Lieutenant Worthington, Sir Robert Bramble, Polonius, Uncle John, Tom Noddy, Macduff, Mr. Dornton, Squeers, King Henry the Sixth, Adam, Malec, Kent, and Rolanio.* Barry relinquished the Tremont Theatre after two seasons, and Dr. Jones, author of "Solon Shingle" and many other pieces, and long well known and popular in Boston, became its lessee. Gilbert was engaged as stage-manager and to act the same round of parts. Two seasons later the theatre passed into the hands of George H. Andrews, the comedian, for one year; but Dr. Jones resumed its management in the next year and wound up its affairs. Gilbert remained in it, and on its final night as a theatre he acted *Sir Robert Bramble* and pronounced a farewell address; so that

he was the last actor who spoke upon the stage of the old Tremont. The building was purchased by a church society, and being rented for lectures, with theatrical scenery, it was reopened with a hymn beginning "Lord, let these ransomed walls rejoice!"

A little while previous to the disruption of the Tremont, Gilbert acted at the Bowery Theatre, New York —under Hamblin's management—having been engaged to personate the sexton, *Peter Bradley,* in "Rookwood." He made his first appearance there, however, as *Sir Edward Mortimer.* His next engagement after the Tremont closed was at Pelby's National, in Boston—the only theatre then open in that city. From there he went to the Federal Street Theatre, when that once-famous house—long since swept away—was reopened by Oliver C. Wyman, and on that occasion he spoke the opening address, written by Frances Sargent Osgood. The season was disastrous and it closed in March, 1846. In April, that year, Gilbert went to London for rest; but, being asked to act, he appeared at the Princess' Theatre as *Sir Robert Bramble,* and he was cordially received by the public and the press; whereupon he accepted an engagement at the Princess' Theatre for the next season. The interim he passed in Paris, where he saw and studied the artists of the Théâtre Français—Rachel, Rose Chéri, Lafont, Frédéric Lemaître, Bocage, Fechter, and

others. He acted for one season at the Princess' and then returned home.

He is next found at the Park Theatre, in New York, where he came forward as *Sir Anthony Absolute,* and where he remained till the destruction of that house by fire—December 16, 1848. He spoke the last words that were spoken on the Park stage, acting *Admiral Kingston,* in "Naval Engagements." Hamblin then engaged him at the Bowery, which in those days was a theatre of the best class and possessed a capital dramatic company, including Mr. and Mrs. James W. Wallack, the Younger, Lester Wallack, Miss Wemyss, Mary Taylor, and others of local repute. There he remained some time; but he is presently found at the Howard Athenæum, Boston, and later at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. At the latter he remained till the opening of the Boston Theatre, in 1854, when he was again engaged by Barry. On the opening night of that theatre he spoke the address, written by that fine poet, T. W. Parsons, and acted *Sir Anthony Absolute.* Four consecutive seasons found him constant in his duties at that theatre and growing more and more in the affectionate respect of the Boston public. He played old men almost exclusively; yet he was seen in two of the most widely contrasted and difficult characters in the range of the Drama—*Bottom* and *Caliban.* "The humor of Gilbert's performance of *Bottom,*" said a critical authority of the time, "was

exquisite. The egregious vanity in the casting of the play—the bottomless vanity and *Bottomish* ignorance—were never more faithfully denoted. It had the true Shakespearean flavor." Another critical writer said: "Gilbert's *Caliban* is a great personation. Of itself and by itself it is just as good in its way as anything Forrest or Brooke or Wallack can accomplish. It is a finished and elaborate yet very vigorous exhibition of dramatic ability; and those who have not seen it are not aware of what John Gilbert is capable, although they may be thoroughly conversant with his *Philip Sabois, Rolanio, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Anthony Absolute,* and half a hundred other parts that he gives so delicately and so naturally." At one of his benefits in Boston, during that fertile and brilliant period of his professional life, Gilbert received a public gift of a costly service of silver plate. It was during his stay at the Boston Theatre that Edwin Forrest, who was his enemy, invariably stipulated, in the written contracts under which the tragedian came there to play star engagements, that John Gilbert should not appear in any performance given by him. This was because Gilbert had approved of the cause of Mrs. Forrest, in the once notorious divorce suit.

From the Boston Theatre, in 1858, the comedian went to the Arch Street, Philadelphia, and there he remained till engaged by the elder Wallack for the house opened by him in Broadway, at the corner of Thirteenth Street,

in 1861. Gilbert came forward as *Sir Peter Teazle,* and at once established himself in the admiration of the New York public. He remained attached to Wallack's Theatre until it ceased to exist—in 1888. From him chiefly the play-goers of his later period received knowledge of the best traditions of the Stage, as associated with the old men of the old comedies, and their recollections of those subjects are intertwined with his honored name.

Gilbert was twice married, but he left no children. His first wife was Miss Campbell, a native of Philadelphia, born in 1806. With her he wedded in 1836. That lady became an actress, appearing at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, as *Sophie,* in "Of Age To-morrow," and on March 15, 1842, at the Bowery Theatre, New York, as *Old Lady Lambert,* in "The Hypocrite." She visited England with her husband in 1846, and was seen at the Princess' Theatre, as *Mrs. Lilywhite,* in "Forty or Fifty." Her death occurred on April 27, 1866, in New York, and she was buried near Boston. Gilbert subsequently espoused Sarah H. Gavett, of Boston, who survived him. In his married life, as in all other ways, he was fortunate and happy. I have been with him in his home, at Manchester-by-the-Sea, and I remember it as a favored abode of affection and peace.

The long annals of the British Stage are opened the moment you begin to review Gilbert's achievements,

to analyze his art, and to consider his professional rank. Quin, Dowton, Munden, Liston, Reeves, Farren, Burton, Blake, Hackett, Burke, and Bass are some of the bright names which start up in imagination or remembrance as the ancestry or brotherhood of that remarkable man. How full John Gilbert's professional life was of endeavor, how high in quality, and therefore how refining and elevating in influence, equally upon his own character and upon the public mind, can be gathered from a glance at some of the parts he played. The list includes *King John, Hubert, King Philip, Cardinal Pandulph, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, Crabtree, Rowley, Sir Anthony Absolute, Kit Cosey, Sir William Dorrilon, Lord Pleony, Sir William Fondlove, Sir John Falstaff, Justice Woodcock, Malvolio, Polonius, the Ghost of King Hamlet, Dogberry, Adam, Leontes, Antigonus, Autolycus, Mr. Simpson, Lord Duberley, Tom Noddy, Captain Copp, Colonel Hardy, Governor Heartall, Sir Bashful Constant, Lord Ogleby, Dr. Cantwell, Sir Robert Bramble, Sir Francis Gripe, Squeers, Mr. Dombey, Justice Greedy, Colonel Damas, Admiral Kingston, Don Manuel, Mr. Hardcastle, Shylock, Sir Edward Mortimer, Dr. Dilworth, Sir Paul Pagoda, Sir Paladin Scruple, Sir Harcourt Courtley, Sarcasm, Dominie Sampson, Baillie Nicol Jarvie, Sir Alexander Shendryn, Penruddock, Adrastus, Iago, Master Walter, Matthew Elmore, King Henry the Eighth, Cardinal Wolsey, Jaques,*

Adam Brock, Old Norval, Job Thornberry, Jesse Rural, Menenius, Adam Winterton, Mr. Dowton, Old Rapid, Mr. Aspen, Mr. Coddle, all the parts in "Macbeth," except *Lady Macbeth* and the waiting gentlewoman, and all the parts in "Julius Cæsar," except the boy *Lucius.* That is but a tithe of the veteran's achievement; yet it lays bare the springs of that renown which was the pride of John Gilbert's contemporaries and friends, and which will long adorn the annals of dramatic history.

Formal but not frigid, stately without pomp, dignified without severity, formidable in its self-reliance and reticence, individual, positive, scrupulous, and exact, but neither aggressive nor caustic, the personality of John Gilbert, although it impressed many of his acquaintances as exclusive and cold, was sincere, manly, gentle, and even tender. He had strong convictions. He was uncompromising. He never flattered anybody, and he never assumed a cordiality that he did not feel. His manner was usually urbane, but his temper was impetuous, and when offended by frivolity, professional incompetence, or sycophantic fawning,—three things which especially he detested,—he could express contempt and scorn with energetic indignation and righteous vehemence. The profession of the actor was, in his esteem, sacred. He allowed no levity on that subject, and his anger was quickly aroused by any trifling with the dramatic art. "Acting, sir," he said to me, on one

occasion,—and he wrote the same thought on another,—"is often called a matter of opinion or of taste; it is nothing of the kind—it is a matter of fact." His meaning was that a competent actor gives a performance that is correct and right, and that its merit is independent of preference or caprice. He knew his art thoroughly, in every department of it and in every particular, and no one could teach him anything about it,—willing though he was to learn, and always deferential to the authority of true intellect and honest thought. He perfectly understood, furthermore, the scope and the nature of his abilities; so that, in his riper years, he never willingly undertook what he was unfitted to achieve, and he never failed to do well whatever he undertook to do at all. The traditions of the Stage were known to him and he respected them—maintaining that they are the fruits of experience, and are rational and wise. Innovations were obnoxious to his judgment. The juvenile actor who plies the conspicuous wrist-band, poses on the hearth-rug, and continually toys with the incombustible cigar, impressed him as a vacuous impertinence. He required strong and distinct character, a definite ideal clearly expressed; fidelity to the text; accuracy in apparel; absolute concurrence with the manners of the time and of the society to be depicted; imagination and sensibility in treatment; harmonious concentration of all the parts and elements in a performance; and pure and perfect

use of the language. Those things he invariably gave when he acted; and even toward the last, when his faculties had begun to fail, he seldom strayed from that absolute precision which for fifty years had been a conspicuous excellence of his art. The actor whom he most admired was Macready—a man of exalted genius, who preferred to pursue a severely accurate method rather than to depend upon the capricious gusts of excitement. Macready in *Richelieu, William Tell, Werner, Virginius,* and *Macbeth* he declared to be perfection—never within his knowledge surpassed or even rivalled. What he thus admired it was natural that he should emulate. He was sometimes a great actor; he was always a correct one. In such characters as *Sir Sampson Legend* and *Sir Anthony Absolute* no man of his time approached him, and it is doubtful whether, in that line of individuality, he was ever equalled. Those are unlovely characters, tyrannical and choleric, and they evoked only a part of the constituents of his ample and comprehensive nature. He acted them with ease and he was perfect in them, but for the fuller expression of his nature you had to see him as *Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Robert Bramble, Jesse Rural,* and above all as *Mr. Dornton.* The personations that he gave of those parts revealed the tenderness of his heart and the lovely refinement of his mind, commingled with a strain of humor which was now jocular, now whimsical, and at all times—certainly within the last fifteen or twenty

years of his professional life—spontaneous, genial, and fluent. He had been a hard actor. He gave, for example, the best performance of *Caliban* that ever was seen in America—and there was in his method all that this fact denotes. But that quality of hardness gradually wore away, and in the latter part of his career he was never so fine as in characters of a venerable aspect, a gentle temperament, and a soft, benign, and winning manner. One of the best of his achievements was the embodiment of the *Abbé Constantin,* which he gave when his days were nearly ended. In the garden of his heart the last flowers that bloomed were still the sweetest, because they were the flowers of charity and love.

XII.

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

1816—1876.

MAKING, one summer day, a pilgrimage to the grave of Charlotte Cushman, I was guided to the place of her rest by a laborer employed in the cemetery, who incidentally pronounced upon the deceased a comprehensive and remarkable eulogium. "She was," he said, "considerable of a woman, for a play-actress." Well—she was. The place of her sepulchre is on the east slope of the principal hill in Mount Auburn. Hard by, upon the summit of the hill, stands the gray tower that overlooks the surrounding region and constantly symbolizes, to eyes both far and near, the perpetual peace of which it is at once guardian and image. All around the spot tall trees give shade and music, as the sun streams on their branches and the wind murmurs in their leaves. At a little distance, visible across green meadows and the River Charles,—full and calm between its verdant banks,—rise the "dreaming spires" of Cambridge. Further away, crowned with her golden dome, towers old Boston, the storied city that Charlotte Cushman loved. Upon the spot where her ashes now rest the great actress stood, and, looking toward

the city of her home and heart, chose that to be the place of her grave; and there she sleeps, in peace, after many a conflict with her stormy nature and after many sorrows and pains. What terrific ideals of the imagination she made to be realities of life! What burning eloquence of poesy she made to blaze! What moments of pathos she lived! What moods of holy self-abnegation and of exalted power she brought to many a sympathetic soul! Standing by her grave, on which the myrtle grows dense and dark, and over which the birds swirl and twitter in the breezy silence, remembrance of the busy scenes of brilliant life wherein she once moved—the pictured stage, the crowded theatre, the wild plaudits of a delighted multitude—came strongly on the mind, and asked, in perplexity and sadness, what was the good of it all? To her but little. Fame and wealth were her cold rewards, after much privation and labor; but she found neither love nor happiness, and the fullest years of her life were blighted by the shadow of fatal disease and impending death. To the world, however, her career was of great and enduring benefit. She was a noble interpreter of the noble minds of the past, and thus she helped to educate the men and women of her time,—to ennoble them in mood, to strengthen them in duty, to lift them in hope of immortality. She did not live in vain. It is not likely that the American people will ever suffer her name to drift quite out of their remembrance: it is

a name that never can be erased from the rolls of honorable renown.

Charlotte Cushman was born, in Richmond Street, Boston, on July 23, 1816, and she died in that city on February 12, 1876. She lived till her sixtieth year, and she was for forty years an actress. Her youth was one of poverty, and the early years of her professional career were full of labor, trouble, heartache, and conflict. The name Cushman signifies "cross-bearer," and certainly Charlotte Cushman did indeed bear the cross, long before and long after she wore the crown. She was a member of one of the original Puritan families. Her first ancestor in America, Robert Cushman, a minister, came over with the Pilgrims to New England. Her father was a merchant. Her mother's name was Saunders, and Saunders was her own middle name, though she did not habitually use it. A schoolhouse bearing the name of Cushman now stands on the site of those buildings. Charlotte's father died while she was young, and left his family in poverty; and that bereavement was ultimately the cause of her embarking upon a public career. Her first appearance occurred at a concert in Boston, on March 25, 1830,—at which time she made a good impression. She had, through the kindness of her father's friend Robert D. Shepherd, of Shepherdstown, Virginia, received from the English musician John Paddon, for a period of two years, the best vocal culture obtainable in her native city. Later

she received encouragement, advice, and practical suggestion from the distinguished singer Mary Anne (Mrs. Joseph) Wood. On April 8, 1835, she came out at the Tremont Theatre as the *Countess Almaviva,* in "The Marriage of Figaro." That may be called her first regular professional appearance.

Miss Cushman's advent was made during an engagement, at the Tremont Theatre, of Mrs. Maeder (Clara Fisher), then in the enjoyment of her fresh laurels, and in days made brilliant and memorable in the history of the American Theatre by the presence of Forrest, Booth, William E. Burton, Blake, Céleste, Charles and Fanny Kemble, and Ellen Tree. The second character assumed by Miss Cushman was *Lucy Bertram,* in "Guy Mannering." Her success was immediate and decisive, and Mr. and Mrs. Maeder presently secured for her an engagement to sing in New Orleans. There, however, having broken her voice by misusing it, she lost the ability to sing, and so ended her experience as a vocalist. That disaster made her an actress. In her trouble she appealed for counsel to James H. Caldwell, manager of the New Orleans Theatre. He advised her to become an actress and introduced her to J. H. Barton, an English tragedian then acting in New Orleans. Barton, at Caldwell's request, gave her instruction; and at length, on the night of that actor's benefit, when only nineteen years old, she appeared as *Lady Macbeth,* and so began her dramatic career.

Her performance of *Lady Macbeth* aroused in New Orleans much public interest and even enthusiasm, and with the prestige of that success Miss Cushman returned to the North and sought an engagement in New York. Hamblin gave her an opening at the Bowery, and her first appearance was effected there. That portion of her life was much fretted with various kinds of trouble. She had to make her way against many obstacles, and she gained no victory without hard fighting. "I became aware," she wrote, "that one could never sail a ship by entering at the cabin windows; he must serve and learn his trade before the mast. This was the way that I would henceforth learn mine." It was not till she met Macready that the day of her deliverance from drudgery really dawned. On April 23, 1837, she appeared at the National Theatre, under the management of James H. Hackett, in the character of *Romeo;* and it was during that engagement, on May 8, 1837, that she first acted *Meg Merrilies.* An incorrect story with reference to Miss Cushman's first appearance as *Meg Merrilies* has been adopted and repeated in various biographies of her. It states that her first appearance as *Meg* was made when the English tenor, Braham, was starring in New York. That was at the Park Theatre in 1840-'41. The fact is that "Guy Mannering," in which *Meg Merrilies* occurs, was not announced for performance during Braham's engagement at the Park Theatre, and if the piece was played at all it must have

been as a substitute for some other that had been promised. Miss Cushman, moreover, was not a member of the Park Theatre company at that time, but was in Philadelphia; and if she then acted *Meg* at the Park she must have done so as a visitor from Philadelphia, at a period when she was playing, with great success, at Burton's National Theatre, in the character of *The Naiad Queen.* The essential fact is that Miss Cushman's first appearance as *Meg Merrilies* was made on May 8, 1837,—several years before the date alleged in those erroneous accounts,—not at the Park Theatre, but at the National Theatre (Italian Opera House), on the corner of Church and Leonard Streets, New York. She also acted the part at the Park Theatre, January 25, 1839, for W. F. Brough's benefit, the cast including the beneficiary as *Col. Mannering,* John Jones as *Henry Bertram,* Morley as *Gabriel,* Peter Richings as *Dirck Hatteraick,* Mrs. Bailey as *Julia Mannering,* and Mrs. Richardson—Elizabeth Jefferson—as *Lucy Bertram.* At several later dates in that season "Guy Mannering" was announced, with Mr. and Mrs. Martyn, Miss Poole, Manvers, and Giubilei in the cast; and, as Miss Cushman remained a member of the Park company, she doubtless repeated her performance of *Meg Merrilies.* That was some time before Braham's début in New York, and consequently the romantic yarn respecting his experience of her acting (that he was almost paralyzed by her terrific aspect) is unfounded. Miss Cush-

man's *Meg Merrilies* attracted no considerable attention in America, comparatively speaking, until after her return from her first visit to Europe.

In the fall of 1837 she was enrolled as a member of the dramatic company at the Park Theatre, where she acted many parts—notably those of *Goneril, Emilia,* and *Gertrude,* with Forrest; and where she made a remarkable hit as *Nancy,* in "Oliver Twist." From that house she went to Philadelphia, where, for a time, she was the manager of the Walnut Street Theatre. In 1844, when Macready came for the second time to the Park, she was engaged, at his earnest request, to coöperate with him; and her success at that time was such as materially enhanced her reputation. It led, also, to one of the most important steps of her life, since it inspired her with the resolve to win repute on the English Stage.

Miss Cushman went to London in the autumn of 1844. Forrest was acting at the Princess' Theatre, and after much effort an opportunity was obtained for her appearance there. She made the plunge, on February 14, 1845, at that theatre, as *Bianca,* in "Fazio," and though coldly received during the first two acts she aroused, in Act Third, unequivocal enthusiasm and gained memorable success. The personation was, in fact, a splendid triumph of mind and fire, and Miss Cushman was at once acknowledged as an actress who, in a certain class of characters, had no superior in England.

"Since the first appearance of Edmund Kean, in 1814," said a London journal of that time, "never has there been such a *début* on the stage of an English theatre." Her engagement lasted eighty-four nights (it was an engagement to act with Edwin Forrest), and she recorded its result in a letter to her mother, saying: "All my successes put together since I have been upon the stage would not come near my success in London, and I only wanted some one of you here to enjoy it with me, to make it complete." She acted *Bianca, Emilia, Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Haller,* and *Rosalind.* A prosperous provincial tour followed, and then, in December, 1845, she appeared at the Haymarket, as *Romeo,*—her sister Susan appearing as *Juliet.* Her stay abroad lasted till the end of the summer of 1849, and to that period belongs her great achievement as *Queen Katharine.*

From the fall of 1849 till the spring of 1852 Miss Cushman was in America. She was seen in many cities, by great assemblages of admiring spectators, and she was everywhere received with acclamation, gathering with ease both laurels and riches. When she appeared, October 8, 1849, at the old Broadway Theatre, New York,—as *Mrs. Haller,*—she introduced Charles Walter Couldock to our Stage, on which he long maintained his rank as a powerful and versatile actor. Couldock acted *The Stranger* and subsequently was seen in other leading characters. Miss Cushman's repertory then included

Lady Macbeth, Queen Katharine, Meg Merrilies, Beatrice, Rosalind, Bianca, Julia, Mariana, Katharina, the *Countess, Pauline, Juliana, Lady Gay Spanker,* and *Mrs. Simpson.* Her principal male characters then, or later, were *Romeo, Wolsey, Hamlet,* and *Claude Melnotte.* In New York she appeared at Brougham's Lyceum, at the Astor Place Opera House, and at the old Broadway Theatre. Her fame and her fortune had now been made, and on May 15, 1852, at the Broadway, she received a benefit and took a formal farewell of the American Stage, and from that time till the end of her days she wavered between retirement and professional occupation. The cause of this vacillation is suggested by her condition. There never was a time, during all those years, when she was not haunted by dread of the terrible disease, cancer, that ultimately destroyed her life. From 1852 to 1857 she lived in England, and in the course of that period she acted many times, in different cities. In December, 1854, when dining with the Duke of Devonshire, at Brighton, she read "King Henry VIII." to the Duke and his guests, and in that way began her experience as a reader.

She then returned to America and, on September 28, 1857, she acted at Burton's Theatre, New York, and was seen as *Cardinal Wolsey,*—giving an embodiment which was ranked with the best impersonations of Shakespearean character. In the early summer of 1858

she gave a series of "farewell" performances at Niblo's Garden, ending on July 6, 1858,—after which she again crossed the Atlantic and established her residence in Rome. In June, 1860, she returned to America and stayed there a year. "Oliver Twist" was given at the Winter Garden in the spring of 1861, when Miss Cushman acted *Nancy,* and James William Wallack, the Younger; J. B. Studley, William Davidge, and Owen Marlowe were in the company. In June of that year she said good-by, at New Haven, and in July she went to Rome, where she gathered around herself a delightful society of artistic persons, and where she remained during the greater part of the following ten years. Her love of country was ardent, and that emotion, during the dark days of the Civil War, was strongly aroused. Once, in 1865, she came home to help the cause of the Union, and by a series of professional appearances, made in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Washington, earned $8,267 for the United States Sanitary Commission. The seven ensuing years were passed by her in Europe, but in October, 1870, she returned home for the last time, and the brief remainder of her life was devoted to public readings, occasional dramatic performances, and the society of friends. On September 25, 1871, Miss Cushman acted in Booth's Theatre as *Queen Katharine,* —William Creswick personating *Wolsey;* and in the course of the engagement then begun, which lasted

till November 4, she also represented *Lady Macbeth* and *Meg Merrilies*. Those parts, together with *Bianca, Emilia, Elvira, Helen McGregor,* and *Nancy,* revealed her genius upon all its sides. Her New York engagement was succeeded by a few others in different cities of the Union. For a time thereafter she was seldom seen, and then only as a reader. The beautiful readings that she gave at Steinway Hall, New York, in March, 1873, and again at the Academy of Music, in January, February, and April, 1874, still dwell in the recollection of those who had the privilege and the happiness to hear them. Public excitement and important literary demonstrations accompanied and signalized, in the autumn of 1874, her final performances on the New York Stage. Those, consisting of *Queen Katharine, Lady Macbeth,* and *Meg Merrilies,* were given at Booth's Theatre, between October 19 and November 7. Her last embodiment there—that of *Lady Macbeth,* presented on the latter date—was seen by a vast assemblage; and after it was ended an ode by Richard Henry Stoddard, an address by William Cullen Bryant, a laurel crown, the plaudits of the multitude, and the tears of proud and saddened friendship were commingled in farewell homage to the queen who laid down her sceptre and departed from her throne.

A few subsequent appearances closed her dramatic career. The most important of them was made in Boston, at the Globe Theatre, on May 15, 1875, as *Lady*

Macbeth, when she was the recipient of public homage in that city, and when she tenderly took leave of her native and favorite community. Her final public appearance was made on June 2, 1875, at Easton, Pennsylvania, where she gave a reading. The last months of her life were passed at Newport, Ashfield, and Boston. Toward the end she had recourse to a Boston chemist, who inspired her indomitable mind with renewed hopes of recovery. Only twenty days before her death, at the Parker House, she spoke to me with cheerful confidence of her anticipated restoration to health. Her eyes were bright: her voice was firm,—though suffused in every tone with an unconscious sadness deeply touching and quite indescribable,—and her noble head and reverend face indicated such a vitality as it seemed impossible that death could conquer. To the last she was an image of majesty. The pain that consumed her suffering body could not quell her royal spirit. She could look back upon a good life; she was sustained by religious faith; she felt upon her gray hair the spotless crown of honor; she met death, as she had met life, a victor; and she passed from the world with all the radiance of her glory about her—like sunset from a mountain peak, that vanishes at once into the heavens.

The immediate cause of Miss Cushman's death was pneumonia. On Saturday, February 12, she went out for a short walk, and she then took cold. Pneumonia ensued, and her system, long enfeebled by cancer,

proved unable to resist that new enemy. She was quite cheerful till the 17th, but a change took place about 2 o'clock on that morning; at 7 she lost consciousness, and at ten minutes past 9 she died. So firmly had she hoped for recovery that as late as February 13 she addressed a note to John McCullough, in which she said: "I wanted to ask you if next November and December were engaged at your theatre in California. I hope to be able to get well and go there, but I cannot positively decide till the middle of May."

Charlotte Cushman was both ridiculed and censured for her numerous "farewells" to the Stage. It ought not to be difficult to understand—remembering that Miss Cushman was a woman of sombre imagination, great sensibility, and celibate condition; that she had been victorious by force rather than by sweetness; that for her conscientious mind and nervous organization the practice of the dramatic art was terribly earnest; and that frequently she was the victim of disease—in what way she often came to believe that the limit of her labor was reached; that the end of her life was near, and that her retirement from the public view was needful. With natures that see widely and feel deeply, such despondent views of personal destiny and worldly affairs are not unusual. Thackeray, long before he wrote "The Newcomes," said of himself that his work was done and he should accomplish no more. In the several farewells that she took of the Stage Miss Cush-

man acted like a woman, and precisely like the woman that she was; and the censors who misjudged her upon that point did so because they failed to consider the probable effect on conduct of that element of feminine weakness—that unsatisfied, and therefore forlorn, tenderness of woman's heart, which was the core of her rugged, stalwart nature. All her farewells were sincere. None of them, till death, could have been final.

There is something so awfully impressive in the vanishing of a great genius and a great force of noble intellect and character out of the world that reverence must pause before the spectacle, no less in humility than in sorrow. The historian of our time will review many important and significant lives, and will lay the laurel upon many a storied tomb; but he will honor no genius more stately or more singular than that which sleeps in the coffin of Charlotte Cushman. It is difficult if not impossible to do justice to such a life. Yet there is a pleasure in recalling the details of her career and meditating upon her energetic, resolute, patient, creative nature. She was faithful, all her days, to high principles of art and a high standard of duty. Nature gave her great powers but fettered her also with great impediments. She conquered by the spell of a strange, weird genius and by hard, persistent labor. In this latter particular she is an example to every member of the dramatic profession, present or future. In what she was as a woman she could not be imitated—for

her colossal individuality dwelt apart, in its loneliness, as well of suffering that no one could share as of an imaginative life that no one could fathom. Without the Stage she would still have been a great woman, although perhaps she might have lacked an entirely suitable vehicle for the display of her powers. With the Stage she gave a body to the soul of some of Shakespeare's greatest conceptions, and she gave soul and body both to many works of inferior origin. There is no likelihood that we shall ever see again such a creation as her *Meg Merrilies*. Her genius could embody the sublime, the beautiful, the terrible, and with all this the humorous; and it was saturated with goodness. If the love of beauty was intensified by the influence of her art, virtue was also strengthened by the force of her example and the inherent dignity of her nature.

The greatness of Charlotte Cushman, therefore, was that of an exceptional because grand and striking personality, combined with extraordinary power to embody the highest ideals of majesty, pathos, and appalling anguish. She was not a great actress merely; she was a great woman. She did not possess the dramatic faculty apart from other faculties, and conquer by that alone; but, being affluent in that faculty, she poured forth through its channel such resources of character, intellect, moral strength, soul, and personal magnetism as marked her as a genius of the first order while they made her an irresistible force in art. When she came upon

the stage she filled it with the weirdness and the brilliant vitality of her presence. Every movement that she made was winningly characteristic. Her least gesture was eloquence. Her voice, which was soft or silvery or deep or mellow accordingly as emotion affected it, used now and then to tremble and partly to break, with tones that were pathetic beyond description. Those were denotements of the soul that smouldered beneath her grave exterior and gave iridescence to every character that she embodied. Sometimes her whole being seemed to become petrified in a silent suspense more thrilling than any action—as if her imagination were suddenly enthralled by the tumult and awe of its own vast perceptions. It made no difference that, toward the last, her person became a little cumbersome, that her countenance was homely, and that some of her peculiarities of manner were mannish. The commanding character, the authentic charm, the lofty individuality—strange, weird, sweet, and fascinating—were victorious all the same.

Miss Cushman was best in tragedy, whether lurid or pathetic, and in sombre melodrama. Theatrical history will probably associate her name more intimately with *Meg Merrilies* than with any other part. That performance was unique. It embodied physical misery, wandering reason, delirious imagination, and the wasted tenderness of a loving but broken heart; and it was tinted with the vivid colors of romance. The method

From a Photograph by Gutekunst. In the Collection of the Author.

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN

by which it was projected was peculiar in this—that it disregarded probability and addressed itself to the imaginative perception. When *Meg Merrilies* sprang forth in the moonlight and stood, with towering figure and extended arms, tense, rigid, terrible, yet beautiful, glaring on the form of *Henry Bertram,* the spectator saw a creature of the ideal world and not of earth. That conception may have been in the brain of Scott; it is not in his page. Miss Cushman could give free rein to her frenzy in that character, and that was why she loved it and excelled in it, and was able by means of it to reveal herself so amply and with such fine dramatic effect. What she thus revealed was a power of passionate emotion as swift as the lightning and as wild as the gale—an individuality fraught with pathos, romance, tenderness, grandeur, the deep knowledge of grief, and the royal strength of endurance. Her *Meg Merrilies* was not her highest work, but it was her most startling and effective one, because it was the sudden and brilliant illumination of her being. In presenting the conceptions of Shakespeare Miss Cushman's spirit was the same, but her method was different. As *Meg Merrilies* she obeyed the law of her own nature. As *Queen Katharine,* which was her greatest personation, she obeyed the law of the poetic ideal that encompassed her. In that stately, sweet, and pathetic character, and again, though to a less extent, in the terrible yet human character of *Lady Macbeth,* the form and

limitations prescribed by the dominant genius of the poet were scrupulously respected. She made Shakespeare real, but she never degraded her ideal to the level of the actual. She knew the heights of that wondrous intuition and potent magnetism, and she lifted herself—and her hearers—to their grand and beautiful eminence. Her best achievements in the illustration of Shakespeare were, accordingly, of the highest order of art. They were at once human and poetic. They were white marble suffused with fire. They thrilled the heart with emotion and they filled the imagination with a satisfying sense of completeness, beauty, and power. They made her illustrious. They did much to assert the possible grandeur and beneficence of the Stage and to confirm it in the esteem of thoughtful men and women. They remain as a rich legacy in remembrance; and they will pass into history among the purest, highest, and most cherished works that genius has inspired and art has accomplished to adorn an age of culture and to elevate the human mind.

XIII.

WILLIAM WHEATLEY.

1816—1876.

The Present presses hard upon the Past, and the change is sadly felt as old favorites drop away. William Wheatley was a brilliant and distinguished actor in his time, and the associations that cluster about such a renown are always those of life and pleasure, never those of death and darkness. When such a man is taken the sense of loss and of the evanescence of human things comes with keen reality to many hearts. Wheatley's career and fame are identified with bright recollections; and his death awakened many minds to the sense of mutability and decline. The roses fade. The lights are put out. The music dies away. The new age supersedes the old and neither knows it nor cares for it.

William Wheatley was a native of New York, born December 5, 1816. He was the son of Frederick Wheatley, once a favorite actor in Baltimore and Philadelphia,—a member of the fine company formed by Warren and Wood for the old Holliday Street Theatre, Baltimore. His mother, who died in 1873, was an

admirable and a justly renowned actress. He inherited talent for acting, together with a predilection for the Stage. His first public appearance was made when he was a child, on October 13, 1826, at the Park Theatre, as *Albert,* in "William Tell," during an engagement played by Macready, who expressed approbation of the boy and encouraged expectation of his success. For several years thereafter, aside from a brief tour in Macready's theatrical company, he continued to act juvenile parts at the Park Theatre. The play of "Tom Thumb" was presented for him by Simpson, and he made a strong impression in the chief part. In 1833 he was at the Bowery Theatre, acting walking-gentlemen. In 1834 he returned to the Park and was assigned to such parts as *Laertes, Henry Moreland, Charles Courtly, Sir Thomas Clifford, Alfred Evelyn,* and *Claude Melnotte.* He first attracted unusual notice there in the drama of "Rienzi." It is remembered as a fragment of personal history that he customarily went before the curtain, in the early days of his experience at the Park Theatre, and,—arrayed in a fine court dress, and doubtless with that long-rolling "r" for which his elocution continued to be remarkable,—announced the play for the ensuing night.

On September 22, 1842, Wheatley appeared at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, as *Doricourt,* in "The Belle's Stratagem"—a character which always remained a favorite with him, and in which, as in *Rover,*

in "Wild Oats," he delighted the public by his energetic vivacity and sun-bright merriment. His success in Philadelphia was brilliant and he became a popular favorite and long continued so to be. On March 24, 1843, Wheatley took a farewell benefit at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and temporarily retired from the Stage. In 1847 he played a star engagement at the Park Theatre, New York, in conjunction with his brilliant sister Emma Wheatley, afterward Mrs. James Mason. At about that time he visited Nicaragua, and it is said that the first American flag flown there was raised by his hands,—on the shore of Virgin Bay. In 1853 he became associated with John Drew in the direction of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and there he continued to manage and act,—at first with Drew, then alone, and then with John Sleeper Clarke,—till the spring of 1861. In the spring of 1862, after acting at Niblo's Garden in the Wallack-Davenport Combination, he leased that theatre, and he continued to manage it till the autumn of 1868, when he sold his interest to Messrs. Jarrett & Palmer and finally retired from management and from the Stage.

His presentations of "The Duke's Motto," "Bel Demonio," "The Connie Soogah," and "Arrah-na-Pogue," during his reign at Niblo's, were among the best efforts of his career as a manager. He was the first representative in America of *Henri de Lagardère,* and by many judges he is remembered as the best.

He presented Edwin Booth as *Bertuccio,* in "The Fool's Revenge," a part which Booth then (1864) acted for the first time, and also he presented Mrs. Lander as *Letitia Hardy* and *Adrienne Lecouvreur,* and he brought forward in rapid succession many of the principal stars of his time,—Forrest, Hackett, Matilda Heron, Kate Bateman, John Collins, Edwin Adams, and Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams. Niblo's had been a circus, just before he leased it, but under his direction it rose to be again a theatre of the first class. At last, however, Wheatley brought out there "The Black Crook," and committed the house to the spectacle vein. He sold advantageously and retired, at a fortunate time. He then lived in retirement, enjoying the ease of a comfortable fortune. The sickness and death of his wife, in 1868, seriously affected his reason, and that event, together with the encroachments of ill health, turned his thoughts to religion. He became devout, and his appearance and manners were so much affected by the solemn habit of his mind that he would have been taken for a clergyman rather than an actor. He contracted a second marriage, and his last days were passed in domestic seclusion, partly at Coney Island, where he owned an estate, and partly in New York. He died in that city, on November 3, 1876.

There is no act more solemnly responsible than the forming of a public estimate of a human being after his life has ended. We know each other very little.

There is much beneath alike the faces that smile and the faces that are sad which we can never know. Wheatley, in character, was somewhat artificial—that is, he was self-conscious, studious of effect, and shallow in emotion. He was, however, amiable in temperament and bright in intellect, and, as his appearance and manners were picturesque and he possessed a fine person, a handsome face, a sonorous voice, and thorough facility in the actor's art, he naturally won popularity and succeeded in professional life. His individuality was strongly self-assertive, and he had both the instinct and faculty of leadership and government within his especial domain. His sense of humor was exceedingly slight, so that it exercised no control over the manifestation of his weakness or his eccentricity. His bearing was pompous, yet urbane. The parts in which he was best were showy, romantic, and pictorial. His *Captain Absolute* was a perfect embodiment. He was admirable in *Claude Melnotte* and in *Doricourt.* His acting did not inspire affectionate interest, and it may be doubted whether any performance that he gave is remembered by any person with delight. He acted *Hamlet, Romeo,* and other high parts in the Drama, but he did not permanently identify his name with any of them. His influence upon the Stage was at times good, but it was neither deep, comprehensive, nor permanent. He was not a great actor, and he was not so devoted to dramatic art as to seek, in his

administration of theatres, for results that are higher, finer, and more ennobling than long runs and good business. His introduction of the Leg Drama of "The Black Crook" upon the American Stage was mischievous. That piece represented a style of amusement that has intermittently prevailed in the English-speaking Theatre from the days of Sir William Davenant, and Wheatley cannot be charged with having invented it. The sensual spectacle, however, is a kind of theatrical display that has done injury, and it is deplorable that his name was ever associated with its evil influence. The student of the history of the American Theatre will pause but briefly on the life of William Wheatley. He will live as the central figure in divers groups of comic incidents, growing out of his characteristic habits of pomp, parade, and unconsciously ludicrous artifice. To the story-teller he is a legend and a boon. To the student of acting and of the growth and changes of dramatic art there is but one lesson deducible from his professional life,—that the line and extent of manifestations of ability in acting are prescribed and limited by the actor's temperament.

XIV.

BOGUMIL DAWISON.

1818—1872.

Bogumil Dawison, one of the ablest of modern German actors, died at his residence near Dresden, on February 2, 1872, aged 54; he had been insane for several years. His appearance when he was in America, in 1866, indicated a more advanced age. The specified date of his birth is May 18, 1818. Dawison was a Polish Jew, the son of a peddler, and was born at Warsaw. His youth was passed amid sordid surroundings and was darkened by penury. Good results are said sometimes to follow that sort of painful experience in early life, but that must always depend on the character that is harassed. The character of Dawison was not improved by it. The temperament that gleamed through his acting was hard and selfish, and he was accounted, by persons who knew him well, a cold, self-seeking, avaricious, unscrupulously ambitious man. It is possible that, in his case, a kind heart and an ardent mind, so constituted as to be dependent for happiness on external rather than internal resources, were chilled and embittered by the enforced endurance of early

hardships. That his nature was capable of at least a wonderful simulation of profound suffering and agonizing passion was signified in his portrayal of the frenzy and grief of *Othello,* over the dead body of the innocent and wronged *Desdemona.* No person who saw can ever forget the pathetic spectacle he presented when he snatched up the corpse of the murdered woman and rocked to and fro, in a convulsion of wild remorse and desolate anguish, with that ghastly burden on his bosom. There was, in that scene, a touch of the electrical fire which sometimes radiates from genius and lights it up for the dull eyes of men. But, whatever Dawison's character may have been, and whatever his claims to the lofty estate of genius in art, it is certain that he possessed signal talents and that he mounted to a high rank alike in professional station and the esteem of his generation.

This actor went on the stage before he was twenty years old, at Warsaw, and was afterward seen at Vilna and Lemberg. At first he played in Polish, but subsequently he learned German. His first appearance on the German Stage was made at Breslau, in 1847. He succeeded, and he rapidly rose to the summit of popularity in Germany. Some of his brightest triumphs were gained at Hamburg, a city reputed to be sympathetic with art and cheering to artists, though despised and condemned by the poet Heine as devoid of all artistic appreciation. Dawison came to America in 1866,

and acted at the Stadt Theater, in the Bowery. On December 29, 1866, by invitation of Edwin Booth, he acted at the Winter Garden, as *Othello,* with Edwin Booth as *Iago* and Mme. Methua-Scheller as *Desdemona,*—Dawison speaking German, Booth speaking English, and Mme. Methua-Scheller speaking both languages. That singular and not commendable experiment had a better effect than might be conjectured, owing to the great earnestness and true and tried ability of the chief players. Symptoms of mental derangement showed themselves in Dawison's conduct before he left America. He departed in the spring of 1867. He had not been long in Europe before news was promulgated of his illness and then of his removal to an asylum for the insane. As an actor he was versatile, passing with ease from the extreme of tragedy to that of domestic drama. He acted *Hamlet, Othello, Shylock, Macbeth, King Richard the Third* and other parts in Shakespeare, and while his ideals were, in some respects, low and narrow, his method was a skilful and sometimes felicitous compound of the colloquial and the heroic,—a blending of what is loosely styled the "natural" with the studied movement and measured delivery more or less compelled by the forms of dramatic poetry.

XV.

CHARLES DILLON.

1819—1881.

Charles Dillon, one of the best of the English actors of our time, fell dead in the street, at Hawick, England, on June 27, 1881, and thus perished a man of extraordinary talent and one whose labors, if he had not been afflicted by propensity for drink, would have given him a foremost position in the contemporary Theatre. Dillon came to the United States in 1861, and attracted much attention by his performance of *Belphégor,* and subsequently he was seen as *King Lear* and in other characters of tragedy. He was deficient in statuesque attributes and in the qualities that are termed classical, and he was not a good declaimer, but he was a remarkably efficient actor, and as such he revealed a surprising depth of tender feeling and he imitated nature so well that his art was perceptible only to the keenest scrutiny. He was not "natural" in the sense of that word as it is abused by careless talkers about spontaneity, who assume that there can be natural acting without preconceived intention, but he felt deeply, and at the same time could direct and control his feelings so as to

make others also feel. No one who saw will ever forget his beautiful, pathetic stage business with the shawl, when, as *Belphégor,* he realized that his idolized wife had abandoned him. It furnished an illuminative example of that felicity in histrionic art which comes of a reasonable independence of words when the actor is developing a situation, and it involved a peculiarly lovely touch of pathos. *Belphégor* is a poor, strolling player. He has married a girl, of good family, who loves him and whom he worships. His wife's relatives, finding her in poverty, have signified that, because her husband is beneath her in social station, they will not recognize her unless she leaves him. This she has refused to do, and for a time she has remained firm in her refusal. Their child has sickened under privation and hardship. The wife's birthday arrives. *Belphégor,* denying himself, has managed to save a little money and has bought a shawl, as a birthday gift for her. On this day, while he is absent from their squalid lodging, she decides to yield to the persuasion of her opulent relatives, and leaving a letter of farewell, she deserts him, to save the child. Dillon, as *Belphégor,* came into the room, eager, exultant, bringing his humble gift, and guarding it as if it were the most precious treasure of the world. The poor player was in a sort of ecstasy, in being able to offer to his cherished wife that little token of remembrance and love. He found and read her letter. He did not speak; his figure

drooped; his face grew wan and desolate; he moved slowly across the floor, dazed and aimless, and as he moved, his grasp relaxing, the precious shawl slid from his hands and, unrolling as it fell before him, was negligently trodden under his feet. The action seemed involuntary. Words cannot express the pathos of its effect. This was only one of many details of Dillon's fine method. He possessed in perfection the art to conceal art.

Dillon's powers in tragedy were extraordinary. He was massive and had repose, and could seem ominous; he always rose to the necessity of a vehement outburst, and his voice had tones of great richness and of mournful beauty. His tragical domain was of the heart, not the intellect; he excelled in portions of *Lear* and *Othello* —the moments of wreck and misery. But he never rose higher,—and dramatic art could not rise higher, in the simple expression of genuine sorrow,—than in the scene of *Belphégor's* effort, when ravaged by grief and hunger, to give his exhibition of buffoonery in the public street. The ideal of manliness, constant amid troubles, supreme above a broken heart, and unconsciously sublime in friendless misery, was magnificent. After that, in the dress-coat portion of the play, the performance dwindled; but in the main it was a great personation. "Belphégor," in English, has long been laid on the shelf. It is a version of "Paillasse," by MM. Fournier and D'Ennery, originally produced, in Paris, with Frédéric Lemaître

in the chief character. It is not, at least in the English form, as symmetrical as might be desired. The mechanism of the Third Act, in which the wandering *Mountebank* finds his wife, is involved and clumsy, and portions of the colloquy are deficient in the essential adjustment of language to character; but it is a meritorious and sympathetic play. The wistful perplexity of the unfortunate player, when slowly admitting to himself the cruel idea that his wife is becoming weary of companionship with him in poverty and want, is shown in a way to touch the heart. The struggle in a suffering woman's mind, between a mother's love and solicitude for her child, on the one hand, and a wife's devotion and sense of duty, on the other, is finely depicted. The grief of the deserted husband and his patient endurance while searching for his wife and child,—a veritable page from the book of human sorrow,—are made piteously real. And, finally, the drama provides an opportunity,—which Dillon grandly improved,—for exposition of the great and sacred passion of love. That actor's expression of the ennobling love that a man of true and great nature can cherish for a woman was, in its simplicity, its sincerity, and its affecting impartment of the sense of goodness and beauty, a prodigy of art. His use of the expedient of the *Mountebank's* vain attempt to pray, on finding himself abandoned, evinced that profound knowledge of misery which either is taught by bitter experience or grasped by unerring intuition.

Dillon gained his best success in America in 1866-'67. He acted at Niblo's Garden; the Broadway Theatre, when that house, which had been Wallack's, was managed by George Wood, and afterward at Wood's Museum, now (1912) Daly's Theatre, but his popularity did not endure. There was a certain commonness in his appearance and demeanor which told against him, and probably that element was in his nature. He had an inordinate fondness for beer, by which fluid his finer faculties were submerged and dulled. It was a great misfortune,—for he was a man of fine mind, good heart, and many winning, companionable qualities, and his powers and resources in acting were exceptional.

Dillon was born at Diss, Norfolk, England, in 1819. He went on the stage in boyhood and worked his way as best he could, having had but little education. At seventeen he was employed at the Surrey Theatre, London, under the management of G. B. Davidge, performing in the ballet and acting minor parts. His professional school was rough, but it was elemental and thorough. He used to say that at one time he was a performer in Richardson's Show. While at the Surrey he attracted the approving notice of that popular actor of nautical parts, Thomas Potter Cook, who recognized him as a young man of exceptional talent. He not only adventured as an actor but early essayed the art of the dramatist, writing several melodramas,—one of which, suggested by Burns's well-known song "John

Anderson, My Jo," was acted with much success,—and contributing, in a miscellaneous way, to various London publications. In 1840 he appeared at the City Theatre, London, as *Hamlet,* giving a performance which attracted some critical attention. He remained in the British capital only a little while, however, such success as he then obtained not having satisfied his ambition. His plan was to win a high reputation in the provincial cities of the kingdom, and not to return to London until he could hold a position in the front rank. That plan he fulfilled, and when, in 1856, at the age of 37, he reappeared in that city, acting at Sadler's Wells, his success was decisive. From "the Wells" he went to the Lyceum, of which he assumed the management. His extraordinary talent, his ample experience, and his ripe professional culture were generally and warmly recognized at that time, and he was enthusiastically designated "the founder of the natural and colloquial school of high art." In 1860-'61 he left England, for a tour around the world. He reached America in the latter year and on April 13, 1861, appeared at the Winter Garden, as *Belphégor.* The Republic was then on the dreadful verge of the Civil War, and no actor could obtain special attention. In 1863 Dillon was in California. He acted for 100 consecutive nights at the Metropolitan Theatre, San Francisco, and was the recipient of much public favor. He then went to Australia, where he passed two years. In 1865 he

returned to America and filled engagements in many cities of the United States, reaching New York in the spring of 1866. On May 16 he appeared at Niblo's Garden, as *Belphégor*. His subsequent tours of American cities were managed by George Wood. They were not as prosperous as they deserved to have been, and he returned to the Stage of his native land. Dillon was amiably described, by Edmund Yates, as "a portery actor." Well, perhaps he was. I am glad to think that I saw something more than that in his performances. He had travelled much and seen mankind under many aspects, and his talk was full of the interest that attaches to anecdote, shrewd observation of character, genial manners, and a quiet, droll, good-natured, indolent humor. As an actor he resembled, in some respects, Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, and his acting exhibited qualities kindred with those of the acting of Edwin Adams. He is remembered less as a tragedian,—though his *Lear* was, in some respects, a fine performance, and his *Macbeth* was imaginatively permeated by superstition,—than as a romantic, human actor in the realm that is represented by *Belphégor, Jean Valjean,* and *Virginius*. He was an artist of exceptional versatility, competent in veins of dramatic expression as widely different as those which are exemplified by *Richelieu* and *D'Artagnan, Claude Melnotte* and *Leontes*. His method was not deformed by hair-splitting refinements and Japanese teapot eccentricities,

and though neither a Kemble, a Cooke, nor a Kean, he understood and respected the traditions that were left by those masters and continued by Macready and Young. His influence was good; his example, in art, was salutary; and remembrance of him, as a kindly, amiable, gentle, interesting man, has not entirely faded. The tears that he caused were those that benefit mankind, and gentle thoughts bless his memory.

XVI.

EMMA WALLER.

1819—1899.

Emma Waller, widow of the once well-known actor, Daniel Wilmarth Waller, died in New York, on February 28, 1899, at the age of eighty. Mrs. Waller was in the maturity of her remarkable powers and at the zenith of her professional fame about 1870, but for a long time she had lived in retirement, and the renown of her achievements had gradually faded out of the general remembrance. In her day she was a tragic actress of the first rank, worthy to be named with Mrs. Yates, Mary Duff, Charlotte Cushman, Charlotte Crampton, Mrs. Warner, and others of that exalted lineage, the queens of the Tragic Stage. She was born in England. Her first appearance in London was made, at Drury Lane, in 1856, as *Pauline,* in "The Lady of Lyons." Prior to that time she had acted in provincial theatres, and there is a record of her appearance at Melbourne, in 1855, with Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, in "Macbeth." On October 19, 1857, she appeared in Philadelphia, playing *Ophelia,* and on April 5, 1858, she made her advent on the New York

Stage, acting, with her husband, at the old Broadway Theatre, as *Marina,* in "The Duchess of Malfi,"—a version of that dark and terrible play having been made for her use by her friend Richard Hengist Horne, the noble old poet of "Orion." After that time, during several seasons, she made starring tours of the country, and she was received with general favor. In February, 1862, she participated in a presentment of Edmund Falconer's picturesque Irish drama, "The Peep o' Day Boys," in which she acted *Nelly Brady.* That production was made by Laura Keene, and was one of the most successful presentments accomplished under Miss Keene's management. The *MacCarthy* was acted by Mr. Waller, and the cast included, among many others, J. G. Burnett, J. H. Stoddart, John T. Raymond, Charles Peters, Milnes Levick, Owen Marlowe, H. F. Daly, Mrs. J. H. Allen, and Miss Ione Burke. During several ensuing seasons Mrs. Waller was absent from New York, but on December 27, 1869, she made a brilliant re-entrance,—appearing at Booth's Theatre as *Meg Merrilies,* in a revival of "Guy Mannering," and giving one of the most powerful performances that have been seen in our time. That drama was frequently repeated at Booth's Theatre, and also in the provinces, in the course of the season of 1869-'70, and Mrs. Waller's embodiment of *Meg Merrilies* became famous. Her later years were, in part, devoted to starring tours, in part to theatrical management (she leased the Troy

Opera House in 1871), and in part to the duties of a theatrical teacher.

Mrs. Waller's characteristic, best, and most admirable performances were those of *Lady Macbeth, Meg Merrilies,* and the *Duchess of Malfi,* but she also played male characters, and her impersonations of *Hamlet* and *Iago* are remembered as expert. She was a woman of stately presence; her countenance was singularly expressive; she possessed dark, piercing eyes, a pallid complexion, and a voice of unusual depth and compass; her temperament was, in the highest degree, emotional; and, whether in repose or in movement, her demeanor was impressively indicative of a self-centred mind, deep feeling perfectly controlled, and great physical power. In the character of *Meg Merrilies* she was admirable. The wasted face, the blazing eyes, the rigid muscles, the bony fingers, the wild hair, the wretched garments,—they were all signs of a hard life, tokens of want and misery, pathetically indicative of that disordered reason,—the peculiar attribute of Scott's wonderful gypsy,—which yet is iron true to one distinct and righteous purpose. The weird dignity of her bearing was impressive beyond words; there were moments, indeed, when she seemed to be a soul inspired by communion with beings of another world. Her acting, in the strange reverie in which *Meg Merrilies* sings the cradle song to *Bertram,* was overwhelming in its pathos: the light of madness seemed to fade out of her eyes,

From an Old Photograph. In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.

MRS. WALLER.

giving place to all the woman-like sweetness of gentle, loving, happy youth. Nothing in the world is more desolate than the irremediable misery of age, and there never was a better type than Mrs. Waller's *Meg Merrilies* of the anguish of a breaking mind, that looks back to youth and happiness from among its own ruins. It was said of Mrs. Waller that she imitated Charlotte Cushman in her impersonation of this part, but it is a fact that she had never seen Charlotte Cushman as *Meg Merrilies,* and her embodiment was absolutely original. Her death-scene as *Meg,* notwithstanding that it included a delineation of physical agony, was in no particular common,—it inspired awe and sorrow; and, in this representative dramatic passage, as in many a kindred one, by the excitation of terror and pity the actress accomplished the true purpose of tragedy and left her hearers chastened, ennobled, and subdued. The Stage ought never to forget her example.

XVII.

ANNE HARTLEY, MRS. G. H. GILBERT.

1822—1904.

ANNE JANE HARTLEY, who became Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, was born at Rochdale, Lancashire, England, on October 21, 1822,—a storied and interesting time, being one year after the death of Napoleon Bonaparte, two years before the death of Byron, and ten years before the death of Scott; while King George the Fourth reigned in England, King Louis the Eighteenth in France, and John Quincy Adams was President of the United States. The remoteness of that period, theatrically, is, perhaps, better indicated by recalling the fact that David Garrick's widow had just died, that John Philip Kemble had been only five years in retirement, and that Edmund Kean, in tragedy, and Robert William Elliston, in comedy, were then at the zenith of eminence. As a child Anne Hartley was trained to dance, in the ballet school of Her Majesty's Theatre, in the Haymarket, London: her first conspicuous appearance on the stage was made as a dancer, under Mr. Abingdon's management, at Bury St. Edmund's, in the Norwich theatrical circuit, England,

in 1845. She was then a handsome young woman of twenty-three, and an expert and delightful dancer,—as, indeed, she continued to be till the end of her stage life. In 1845 she married George H. Gilbert, an actor and manager, and thereafter, for several seasons, she traversed the English provinces, appearing from time to time in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. In 1849 she accompanied her husband to America, where she had her dramatic career. Mrs. Gilbert's first fifteen years in America were passed in Western cities. In 1850 she joined John Rice's company, at his theatre in Chicago. Thus far she was only a dancer, but she soon drifted into acting, and she was successful from the first. In 1857 she was a member of John Ellsler's company, at Cleveland, playing first old women. In that season she acted *Lady Creamly,* in "The Serious Family," and *Mrs. Hardcastle,* in "She Stoops to Conquer,"—William E. Burton being the star, as *Aminadab Sleek* and *Tony Lumpkin:* and she always remembered, and often pleasurably recalled, that Burton addressed her in language of cordial approval and warm encouragement. In 1858 she joined Lewis Baker's company, at Louisville. In 1861 she was acting at Cincinnati, under the management of George Wood,—husband of Eliza Logan,—who afterward established Wood's Museum (later Daly's Theatre), in New York. During her novitiate she had experience of labor and sorrow, hardship and vicissitude, as well as ample practical

training and abundant opportunity to observe life and to study human nature.

Mrs. Gilbert's first appearance in New York was made at the second Olympic Theatre, which had been Laura Keene's,—situated in Broadway, south of Bleecker Street, on the east side,—under the management of that sparkling, delightful actress Mrs. John Wood,—with John Duff in the background,—in September, 1864, on which occasion she acted the *Baroness,* in "Fifine." There she remained for two seasons (Mrs. Wood retiring from the theatre in June, 1866), and there she steadily advanced in professional skill and popular favor. From the Olympic Mrs. Gilbert went to George Wood's Broadway Theatre (the house which had been successively Brougham's Lyceum and Wallack's Theatre), and there she remained, at first under Wood's management and then under that of Barney Williams, till 1869. One of the most brilliant and decisive successes of her professional life was gained at that theatre, when, on August 5, 1867, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence presented Robertson's fine comedy of "Caste," for the first time in America, and Mrs. Gilbert impressed, charmed, and delighted by her perfect impersonation of the stately, fastidious, formidable *Marquise de St. Maur.* On leaving the Broadway she went to Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, which was opened, in Twenty-fourth Street, on the site of the subsequent Madison Square Theatre—demolished in 1908,—with

Robertson's comedy of "Play." The cast included E. L. Davenport, George Holland, William Davidge, J. B. Polk, Agnes Ethel, and George Clarke, all now dead. Mrs. Gilbert played *Mrs. Kinpeck.* Fanny Davenport and Mrs. Chanfrau were members of the dramatic company, in that season—the first of Augustin Daly's management. (Fanny Davenport died on September 26, 1898.) Mrs. Gilbert remained with Daly's company, through all its changes and varying fortunes, until the death of that famous manager, June 7, 1899, ended his career and dispersed his dramatic forces. Then she accepted employment under the management of Charles Frohman, and became a member of the theatrical company supporting Miss Annie Russell. On October 24, 1904, at the New Lyceum Theatre, Mrs. Gilbert made her first appearance as a star, being then in the eighty-second year of her age, in a play, by the late Clyde Fitch, called "Granny."

Mrs. Gilbert was an actress for fifty-four years (after five years as a dancer), and she remained in active employment to the last. She began an engagement in "Granny" at Powers' Theatre, Chicago, Illinois, on November 28, and gave five performances,—the last on December 1. She died, in the old Sherman House, in that city, a few minutes after noon, on December 2. The immediate cause of her death was hemorrhage of the brain, resulting from the shock of a cold water bath—which, throughout her life, she was accustomed

to use, every morning. The full list of parts that she impersonated, in the course of the many years of her professional career, is long and varied, and it strikingly illustrates her force, versatility, humor, affluent animal spirits, fine sense of characteristic qualities in human nature, and tireless energy. Few actors of our time have played as many parts; no actor has shown finer insight or more nearly perfect and entirely delightful art than Mrs. Gilbert did, in those parts wherein especially she excelled.

During the period that preceded her advent at Daly's Theatre Mrs. Gilbert participated in performances with many of the most eminent actors of the time. She acted *Goneril* and also *Regan,* with James W. Wallack, the Younger, as *King Lear;* the *Widow Cade,* with Edwin Forrest as *Aylmere; Lady Macbeth,* with Edwin Booth as *Macbeth; Meg,* in "The Willow Copse," with Charles W. Couldock as *Luke Fielding;* and *Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Sternhold,* and *Lucretia McTabb,* with John Edmond Owens. Her range included such different parts as those of the *Infant Phenomenon,* in "Nicholas Nickleby," and the *Baronne de Cambri,* in "Frou-Frou"; the *Schoolmarm,* in "Pocahontas," and the *Marquise,* in "Caste"; *Tilburina's Confidante,* in "The Critic," and *Mrs. Wilfer,* in "Our Mutual Friend"; *Betsy Trotwood,* in "David Copperfield," and *Hester Dethridge* (the most weird of her impersonations), in "Man and Wife." Under Daly's management she distinguished herself,—

to mention but a few of her performances,—as *Miss Garth, Widow Warren, Mrs. De Boots, Mrs. Candour, Mrs. Corney, Mrs. Rackett, Aunt Dorothy,* in "Pique"; *Mrs. Bargisse,* in "7-20-8"; *Xantippe Babbitt,* in "A Night Off," and *Mrs. Laburnum,* in "The Railroad of Love." Under Charles Frohman's management she appeared at the old Lyceum Theatre, on September 7, 1899, as *Aunt Susan,* in "Miss Hobbs." During the season of 1900-'01 she acted the *Queen Dowager,* in Captain Marshall's fine play of "The Royal Family." Later she performed as *Mrs. Chatris,* in a play by Clyde Fitch, called "The Girl and the Judge"; as *Mrs. Deborah,* in "Mice and Men," and in "The Younger Mrs. Parling." Her appearance in "Granny" was the beginning of the farewell season, and *Granny* was the last part she played. Her final appearance on the New York Stage occurred, at the Lyceum Theatre, on November 12, 1904. She died as she would have wished to die, in active exercise of her profession to the last moment of her life, intrepid, indomitable, superb. Slightly to alter the words of her favorite poet:

> "Her day without a cloud has past
> And she was glorious to the last—
> Extinguished, not decayed."

In 1901 Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons published a book of Mrs. Gilbert's stage reminiscences, "edited"

by her friend Mrs. Charlotte M. Martin—but, as in many books of the kind, the interposition of an editorial hand dissipated the original personality and preserved little but trivialities. As a girl this veteran of the Stage might have had at least a glimpse of the wonderful Edmund Kean, the imperial Sarah Siddons, and the gorgeous Elliston. As a woman she knew the American careers of Mary Duff and Junius Brutus Booth; she was contemporary, on the English Stage, with magnates of the Macready and Helena Faucit group, and she lived to act with Burton, Owens, Couldock, J. W. Wallack, the Younger; Davenport, Edwin Forrest, and Edwin Booth. In the West she acted with John Collins,—the melodious *Paul Clifford,*—the successor to the Irish Johnstone and the still more Irish Tyrone Power. In her young days the genuine melodrama of Dimond's and Terry's time was declining, the tragedies of Richard Lalor Shiel were popular, and the comedies of Sheridan Knowles were rising into fame. In her prime of womanhood the dramatic sceptre was held by such players as Forrest, G. V. Brooke, and Charlotte Cushman. She saw the methods of physical exuberance give place to those of the refined intellect; she saw the Old Comedies pass from the Stage, that knows them no more; she saw the development of a teeming and feverish civilization that craves constant novelty rather than the serene beauties of art, and demands sensation above everything else; she saw the

downfall of Wallack's Theatre and of Daly's Theatre, and the nearly total extinction of the race of genuine managers,—a race typified by Barry, Henderson, Burton, Wheatley, Ford, Wallack, and Daly; and, having borne a worthy part in some of the greatest triumphs, Shakespearean and otherwise, of her long, busy, memorable time, she survived to view with a sunny smile a period of luxury and frippery, cynical levity and tainted farce, "problem" plays and theatrically epitomized novels, tailor-made characters and puff-made stars, and all the numerous vagaries of experiment and excrescences of enterprise that result from treating the Drama exclusively as a business and not at all as an art;—but of all that teeming experience the book called her "Reminiscences" gives only the faintest suggestion. Here and there, however, the recorded remarks of Mrs. Gilbert are illuminative, as to her professional success. "The fact that I always had my eyes open," she said, "made things easier for me. I got into the way of watching every part going on around me. To this day I find myself still watching, and I often say to myself, 'I wonder if I should do that in just that way, if I were acting that part?'" Still more significant is her remark: "I suppose the constant thinking myself into a part ends in giving me an expression that belongs only to the character I am just then performing." This too is wise, as well as explanatory of the actress: "My feeling has always been that an actor ought to come somewhere

near his own ideal, satisfy his manager, and please his audience, before he gets eager to read what is printed about him." If all actors would take the same view of that subject the profession of the Stage would be worthier, and the devotees of it would be happier; because much that is printed about the Stage is mere tattle and trash, and by far the larger part of it is unworthy of being read by anybody.

Students of the Stage find in the books on that subject abundant information about the old tragedy queens of the early drama, and much likewise, though naturally somewhat less,—because comedy is more difficult to discuss than tragedy,—about the comedy queens. Mrs. Cibber still discomfits the melting Mrs. Porter by a tenderness even greater than the best of *Belvideras* could dispense. Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Oldfield still stand confronted on the historic page, and still their battle continues year after year. All readers know the sleepy voice and horrid sigh of Mrs. Pritchard, in *Lady Macbeth's* awful scene of haunted somnambulism; the unexampled and unexcelled grandeur of Mrs. Yates in *Medea;* the infinite pathos of Anne Barry (Crawford), and her memorable scream, as *Lady Randolph,* at "Was he alive?"; the comparative discomfiture of both those ladies by Mrs. Siddons, with her wonderful wailing cry, as *Isabella,* "O, my Biron, my Biron"; her overwhelming *Lady Macbeth* and her imperial *Queen Katharine.* The brilliant story of Peg Woffington, the sad fate

of Mrs. Robinson, the triumphant career of Mrs. Abington, and the melancholy collapse of Mrs. Jordan,—all those things, and many more, are duly set down in the old chronicles; but the books are comparatively silent about the "Old Women" of the Stage—an artistic line no less delightful than useful, of which Mrs. Gilbert was a sterling and brilliant representative. Mrs. Jefferson, the great-grandmother of the lamented Joseph Jefferson, a woman who actually died of laughter, on the stage (1766-'68), might fitly be mentioned as the dramatic ancestor of such actors as Mrs. Gilbert,—for Mrs. Jefferson was a woman of great loveliness of character and of great talent for the portrayal of "old women," and likewise of certain "old men" in comedy. "She had," says Tate Wilkinson, "one of the best dispositions that ever harbored in a human breast," and he adds that "she was one of the most elegant women ever beheld." Mrs. Gilbert never failed to suggest an image of grace, goodness, and piquant ability.

Mrs. Vernon was the best in the line of "old women" until Mrs. Gilbert came, and the period which saw Mrs. Judah, Mrs. Vincent, Mrs. Germon, Mary Carr, Mrs. Chippendale, Mrs. Hind, Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Stirling, Mrs. Billington, and Mme. Ponisi saw no superior to Mrs. Gilbert in her special walk. Because of her proficiency, in youth, as a dancer, her motions had spontaneous grace. She could assume the fine lady, without suggesting the parvenu. She was equally good,

whether as the formal and severe matron of starched domestic life or the genial old dame of the pantry. She could play *Temperance,* in "The Country Squire," and equally she could play *Mrs. Jellaby,* in "Bleak House." All varieties of the eccentricity of elderly women, whether serious or comic, were easily within her grasp. *Betsy Trotwood,* embodied by her, became a living reality, in the play on "David Copperfield"; while, on the other hand, she suffused with a sinister horror her furtive, stealthy, gliding, uncanny personation of the half insane *Hester Dethridge,* in "Man and Wife." That was the first great success that Mrs. Gilbert gained, under the management of Daly. Her assumption of the *Marquise de St. Maur* was instinct with aristocracy. Most of her later triumphs were obtained as the formidable lady who typifies the domestic proprieties and the Nemesis of Respectability. It was her refined but severely regular presence that gave soul and wings to "A Night Off." From *Miss Garth* to *Mrs. Laburnum* is a far stretch of imitative talent for the interpretation of the woman nature that everybody, from Shakespeare down, has found it difficult to treat. Mrs. Gilbert always impressed her audience by clear-cut, brilliant identification with every type of character that she assumed, but also she denoted her kind heart and sweet, gentle, yet never insipid, temperament,—the condition of sympathy, graciousness and cheer which is the flower of a fine nature and a good

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JAMES LEWIS
as
Launcelot Bargiss,

MRS. G. H. GILBERT
as
Hypatia, Mrs. Bargiss,

in "Seven-Twenty-Eight."

life. Certain scenes in which Mrs. Gilbert and Charles Fisher or James Lewis participated, as old married persons, are remembered for their intrinsic beauty,—suggestive of the touching stanza:

> "And when with anger Time transported
> Shall think to rob us of our joys,
> You'll in your girls again be courted,
> And I'll go wooing with my boys."

To me, and, I believe, to all who knew her, she was, as an actress, a comfort and a blessing, while as a woman, her piquant eccentricity, sturdy independence, inveterate resolution, and dauntless courage, combined with integrity, a sensitive, sympathetic temperament, a kind heart, and gentle, winning manners, at once inspired profound respect and gained ardent, enduring affection. She was a never failing delight and a constant monition. Her sympathy with the young was deep and quick: she was always ready and glad to speak the word of genial encouragement to inexperience and to back it with shrewd suggestion and wise advice. In one expedient of acting, in particular, she was preeminently expert,—the use of time. It was a technical education to watch and study her employment, in speech, movement, and gesture, of pause, rapidity, or deliberation. She never obtruded herself. Each of her performances possessed the invaluable attribute of seeming inevitability. What she did she made to seem exactly

right to be done, and as though, under the given circumstances, nothing else could possibly occur. To age she would not surrender, and she was indescribably amusing, and often a little pathetic, in her politely brusque resentment of any intimation that she was old or required attention or assistance. I heard her, one evening, in a railway station at Edinburgh, scolding a young actor of the company with which she was travelling for having secured a cab for her use. "How dare you, sir?" she was saying: "How *dare* you? Do you suppose I'm an *old* woman and need *anybody* to take care of *me?* How do you know I wanted a cab at all? There—you are a dear, good, *bad* boy. Thank you, my dear. Don't you ever dare to do it again!" And away she drove. As example of artistic coöperation, the ability and willingness to "play together," for the right effect, without regard to self, I have seen nothing finer than Joseph Jefferson and W. J. Florence, in "The Rivals," and Mrs. Gilbert and James Lewis, in the Daly comedies. Mrs. Gilbert and Lewis, though they viewed each other with respect and admiration, were not close friends, and in their attitude toward each other, as age clawed them in his stealing clutch, they were comic. "Poor old lady!" Lewis would say; "I'm afraid she's beginning to break up." "Poor James!" Mrs. Gilbert would remark; "he's getting on—getting on."

Mrs. Gilbert desired to be always at work. She was

uneasy away from the theatre. When Daly revived "London Assurance," in 1896-'97, she was much dissatisfied at being out of the bill, and she appeared at rehearsal, to complain because she had not been cast. "But," expostulated Daly, "there's nothing in it for you." "Well," she answered, "you've got a dance in it: let *me* dance. I'll come in as an old maid of the neighborhood,—and, let me tell you, I can dance as well as anybody *you* ever saw!" And, though then seventy-four years old, she had her way. Daly closed the Third Act of "London Assurance,"—a play which he had rearranged in four acts,—with the old dance of Sir Roger de Coverley, and Mrs. Gilbert, a perfect picture of the times, in wide flounced, dark green silk crinoline, her dear old face framed in quaint, bobbing corkscrew curls, participated, to the surprise and unbounded delight of the audiences, dancing with all the vigor, dexterity, and grace of her youth. Her example is commended to the emulation of some of the younger, and, of course, much more important "artists" of to-day, who consider it beneath their dignity to accept anything but "leading parts."

On the night of her first performance, in New York, of *Granny,* Mrs. Gilbert gave one of the finest exhibitions of self-control and resolution a long experience of the Stage has ever revealed to me. She was then nearly eighty-four years old: she had learned a new part and devised a new performance: she had been received with

disconcerting sympathy and warmth, by her audience: she was deeply agitated—and, in the middle of a long speech, the words left her, and she "stuck." For a moment she trembled violently, and it seemed as though she could not go on. Then, slowly she straightened her frail old body, and by, obviously, an immense effort of the will, *compelled* herself to remember the lost speech, took up the broken sentence, and with perfect self-possession, smoothly and exactly, acted out the scene.

I have been blessed with many faithful, affectionate friends: no friendship has been dearer to me than that of Mrs. Gilbert. To think of her is always to think of something good and fine,—of pleasant rambles together, in Old World cities where we chanced to meet,—in Dublin,—in Edinburgh,—in Nottingham,—of an afternoon at Newstead,—of an evening with Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly, drifting in the shadows of Shakespeare's church,—and of many a festal night at Daly's table in the "Woffington Room" at his theatre, when she impressed by her natural dignity, charmed by her sweetness of feeling and her blithe conversation, and delighted by her exquisite, old-fashioned, high-bred courtesy. And I am rejoiced and grateful to remember that she never forgot me. The play of "Granny" is thin and frail, but the accomplished old actress, skilled in the art to create and sustain illusion, made much out of nothing, while her deep knowledge of human nature and her acute sympathy with the joys and sorrows

of human life enabled her to accentuate trite incidents and to invest commonplace situations with the light of humor and the warmth of pathetic feeling. I did all I could to celebrate that effort and, only a few days before her death, she sent to me the last message which, directly, I ever received from her:

"November 2, 1904.
"133 West 61st Street, N. Y.

"My dear Mr. Winter:—*Grandma* wishes to thank you for your kind words and to tell you how much she appreciates and cherishes every word you have said of her and to her.

"Dear Mr. Winter, believe me very sincerely yours,
"GRANDMA GILBERT."

On her birthday, a few years before her death, thinking of our long friendship, I sent to Mrs. Gilbert a copy of a book by me, about Ada Rehan, on the fly leaf of which I wrote these lines, which may fitly close this poor but sincere memorial of a great actress and a beloved friend:

OLD FRIENDS.

The sunset beams that backward flow
Illumine with their golden glow
Life's glim'ring plain,
And we, as side by side we wend,
Look to the Past, where darkly blend
Shadows of hopes and dreams, dear friend,
Pleasure and pain.

But there's no darkness on the track
Where we have journeyed! Looking back
O'er many a year,
By loving fancy led, I deem
I still can see the roses gleam,
And, sweet by many a murm'ring stream,
The violets peer.

So be it till the light shall fail,
And as we wander down the vale
Our fate be blest,
By fond affection holding fast,
Only to think of pleasures past
With grateful hearts, and so, at last,
Find peace and rest.

XVIII.

JOHN EDMOND OWENS.

1823—1886.

To think of John Edmond Owens is to recall one of the most comical men that have graced and cheered the Stage. He was both humorist and comedian. All his life he was a close student of the Drama and of the art of acting, and he devotedly labored to equip himself as an artist; nor did he fail in that endeavor—for his impersonations were diversified, and each of them was brilliantly distinct and thoroughly and finely finished. Yet Owens was more indebted to Nature than to Art for those characteristic attributes that made him great. The development of humor upon the stage within the latest generation has taken the direction of crackling wit and dry drollery. The comedians of that period, with scarcely an exception, have been men of slender person, thin visage, acute mind, incisive voice, and intellectual and elaborate method. The predominant and most approved style has been that of Charles Mathews. Art, in its best representatives, has always concealed art, and its manifestations have often been delightful. Wallack, Murdoch, Sothern, Boucicault,

Clarke, J. K. Mortimer, Raymond, Lewis, Stoddart, Wyndham, and others of that school, have given pleasure to thousands and some of them have gained renown; yet all this while scarcely one comedian has arisen in whom the element of humor has revealed itself as an affluent and spontaneous force. The essentially humorous actors,—Holland, Blake, Warren, Jefferson, Florence, Setchell, and Owens,—were the survivors of an earlier generation. It has been a scientific and critical period, and the feverish anxiety of it has everywhere manifested itself in the growth of discontent and in the decline of joy. Upon the Stage that anxiety has appeared in the hardness and metallic glitter that ensue from acrid strife and ravenously ambitious effort. The Wilks type of actor, indeed, has had its successors, all along. The Munden type has reappeared in Farren and Fisher and Gilbert. There has been no lack of intellect, or of brilliant vivacity, or of pitiless satire, or of grotesque and sardonic burlesque; but of happiness the Stage has given few signs. Burton, who transmitted the tradition of Haines, Suett, Liston, and Reeve,—Burton, at the sound of whose voice every heart beat happily and every face smiled,—has had no successor, born and reared in our time. Owens, at the age of seventeen, was associated with Burton, then thirty-six, and was his disciple and belonged to his period; and Owens was the last comedian of that happy lineage and that auspicuous strain. Even

to remember him,—for those who knew his acting, before the fever of the age began to perplex its freedom and chill its sunshine, as it did toward the last, when he tried to adjust his fine powers to such characters as *Elbert Rogers,* in "Esmeralda," and *Hezekiah Perkins,* in "Cooke's Corners,"—is to be composed, refreshed, and cheered.

Tragedy, with all its difficulties, is easier for the actor than Comedy. The tragedian can, to some extent, depend upon his theme for his effects. The comedian must depend upon himself. With him, therefore, natural powers are more essential than acquired facilities. Owens was born to be a comic actor. He was intrinsically funny. His personality was comic and at the same time lovable. He was thoughtful in mind and affectionate in heart, but above all he was a creature of buoyant, merry temperament. He enjoyed life, absolutely and fully, and he did not trouble himself with fruitless and saddening speculation as to its origin or its destiny. He could, whenever he pleased, look at practical affairs in the light of common sense, and see them precisely as they were and deal with them in a perfectly practical spirit. His character was exceedingly strong, and his principles were those of inflexible rectitude. He customarily saw everything in its comic aspect, and there was no trifle from which he could not derive mirth. He was full of kindness and of the desire to make others as happy as himself.

His humorous vitality was prodigious. It sparkled in his bright brown eyes; it rippled in the music of his rich, sonorous, flexible voice; it exulted in the bounteous health of his vigorous constitution; it rejoiced in his alert demeanor, his elastic step, his beaming smile, his exuberant and incessant glee. He was, when acting, too truly an artist ever to intercept with his personality the spectator's view of the character he had assumed; but, when playing a humorous part, he invariably conveyed the impression of joyous ease and personal relish. His cheeriness overflowed. His comic acting was rosy with health and redolent of enjoyment. He never imparted the sense of inadequacy and of effort. His humor—which was ludicrous drollery instinct with kindness—was diffused from the hydrant,—not from the tap. He refreshed with the excess and superfluity of a rich nature. He was never strenuous; never complex; never stilted. His comic power was elemental, and the natural manifestation of it inevitably resulted in comic effect. He could indeed play serious parts, for he possessed a true vein of pathos, and he lacked neither authority nor repose; but his distinctive gift was that of comic power, and as long as he acted from the distinctively humorous impulse he never went astray from Nature, and he never failed to touch the heart. His embodiment of *Caleb Plummer,* in which there was an exquisite strain of spontaneous, involuntary tenderness, was the perfection of humor,

From a Crayon Portrait. *In the Arthur Winter Memorial Library.*

JOHN E. OWENS

as

Solon Shingle, in "The People's Lawyer."

and the eyes that smiled at it always smiled at it with love and through tears. It was only in those moods when he was critical of himself, and chose to act from precept rather than from instinct, that Owens sometimes marred the beauty of his art and left his hearers unmoved. At those times he thought it essential to be what is styled "true to life," and in becoming literal and photographic he became monotonous and dry. The excess, for example, to which he sometimes carried the coarser traits of *Solon Shingle* was one result of that critical caprice. No dramatic embodiment was ever funnier; but it would have been just as funny, and it would have been more endearing, if it had not been quite so literal. Those two impersonations, however—*Caleb Plummer* and *Solon Shingle*—marked him as a great comedian and established his rank beyond question. His regular repertory comprised about fifty parts, but those were at the head of the list, and with those were intimately associated *Dr. Pangloss,* in "The Heir-at-Law"; *Joshua Butterby,* in "Victims"; *Henry Dove,* in "Married Life"; *Grimaldi,* in "The Life of an Actress"; *Dr. Ollapod,* in "The Poor Gentleman"; *Horatio Spruggins,* in "Forty Winks"; *John Unit,* in "Self"; *Mr. Gilman,* in "The Happiest Day of My Life"; *Graves,* in "Money"; *Meddle, Toodle,* and *Paul Pry.* He was the best representative of *Uriah Heep* that has been seen. He played *Silky,* in "The Road to Ruin," better than it has ever been played on the

American Stage, except, perhaps, by John Sefton. He was equally delightful in characters so strongly contrasted as *Micawber* and *Aminadab Sleek, Farmer Allan* and *Billy Lackaday.* He developed all the humor there is in *Touchstone,* and he was the best *Tony Lumpkin* of his time. He comprehended character at a glance, and he completely merged himself in his ideal. Each of his embodiments was stamped with his signet—as it ought to have been, for no man becomes an actor merely because he puts on a successful disguise—but each of them was a different person in every particular. He undertook no quest of theatrical exotics, but was content with accepted types. He was conservative in his profession; he respected it and he kept it pure. His career as an actor covered a period of forty-two years—from 1840 to 1882. His last appearance on the stage was made at the Harlem Theatre, early in 1882, as *Solon Shingle.*

Owens was sometimes a member of the stock; sometimes a star; and at almost all times a manager. He managed theatres in Baltimore, New Orleans, and Charleston, and he gained a large fortune. In 1853 he bought a farm, near Baltimore, and named it Aigburth Vale,—in affectionate memory of the dwelling place of his ancestors in Wales. There he built a fine house, and there he had a home for nearly thirty-four years, in happy companionship with his devoted wife. Owens was born at Liverpool, England, April 2, 1823,

and he died at Aigburth Vale, December 7, 1886, and was buried in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore. He lived a good life, unpretentiously devoted to good objects, adorned with good deeds, and irradiated with the sunshine of gentleness and humor. He was a great comedian, one of original genius and independent mind, and his character and career illustrate the truth that the best individual development, alike for itself and the world, is that which takes its own course and is not moulded by the influence of the time through which it passes. In private life Owens was gentle, genial, sympathetic and kind, and those who were nearest to him loved him best.

XIX.

CHARLES ALBERT FECHTER.

1824—1879.

Charles Albert Fechter was born in London, England, October 23, 1824, and he died at Quakertown, Pennsylvania, August 5, 1879. His father, a native of France, was of German lineage; his mother, a native of Flanders, was of Italian lineage; so that in him were united distinct and opposite characteristics of race. In boyhood he was taken to France, and sent to school, at Boulogne-sur-Seine. In 1840 he acted, in a private theatrical entertainment, at the Salle Molière, in Paris. In 1841 he was a member of a strolling company that acted in Florence. In the same year he returned to Paris, and for a short time studied at the Conservatoire, with a view to employment in the Théâtre Français. The next three years he devoted to study of the art of sculpture. In 1844 he made his début at the Théâtre Français, as *Seide,* in Voltaire's "Mahomet," and later he played *Valère,* in Molière's comedy. He subsequently appeared at the Theater Royal, Berlin, where he acted miscellaneous parts, under the management of M. St. Aubin. In 1847 he returned to the Paris Stage, acting at the Vaudeville,

and in the same year he carried a theatrical company to London. In 1848 he filled a third engagement in Paris, and from that time till 1860 he was a favorite on the French Stage. His great success, in those days, was gained as *Armand Duval,* in "La Dame aux Camélias," of which he was the original representative,—with Eugénie Doche as *Marguerite Gauthier.* On October 27, 1860, he made his début in English drama, acting at the Princess' Theatre, London, as *Ruy Blas.* Afterward he appeared in "The Corsican Brothers," "Don Cæsar de Bazan," "Hamlet," and "Othello." On January 10, 1863, as manager, he opened the Lyceum Theatre, London, with "The Duke's Motto,"—adapted by John Brougham, from the French,—and there he continued to manage and to act till the autumn of 1867. "Bel Demonio," "Hamlet," "The King's Butterfly," "The Mountebank" (known to our Stage as "Belphégor"), "The Roadside Inn," "Ruy Blas," and "The Master of Ravenswood" were among the plays that he produced. After leaving the Lyceum he acted, at the London Adelphi, *Obenreizer,* in "No Thoroughfare," and subsequently he made a professional tour of the British provincial theatres.

In 1870 Fechter came to America, appearing, January 10, at Niblo's Garden, as *Ruy Blas.* He afterward, January 26, acted *Lagardère* and, February 14, *Hamlet.* His next important undertaking was the management of the Globe Theatre, which had been known

as Selwyn's, in Boston. There he was allowed unlimited sway and was paid at the rate of $10,000 a year, but he had not been there long before he quarrelled with James W. Wallack, the Younger,—one of the most amiable of men,—and presently with Arthur Cheney, the proprietor. The remainder of his career was full of painful vicissitudes. The Lyceum Theatre, in Fourteenth Street, New York, was built for him, on the remains of the old French Theatre, but he did not open it. In 1874 he was associated with a theatre called the Park, situated at the southeast corner of Broadway and Twenty-second Street, New York, which was opened, April 13, with "Love's Penance," under the management of William Stuart. (That house was burnt down, October 30, 1882, the date appointed for the first appearance in America of Lillie Langtry. Mrs. Langtry appeared at Wallack's: William Stuart died, in New York, December 27, 1886.) At the Park Theatre Fechter appeared in association with Miss Lizzie Price, whom subsequently he married. He was unsuccessful, and finally he retired to a farm, which he had bought, in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. In 1871 he had the misfortune to fall, on the ice, and one of his legs was broken. His last appearance in New York was made at the Broadway Theatre, in December, 1877, and January, 1878, when he acted *Monte Cristo, Obenreizer, Hamlet,* and *Ruy Blas,* but those performances exhibited enfeebled powers, and were seen with regret.

Fechter excelled in melodrama,—the drama of situation,—and in that he required moments of convulsive passion for the full display of his peculiar powers. At such moments he became inspired by a kind of frenzy,—reckless and lawless, yet not wholly ungoverned,—which sometimes produced thrilling effects on sensibility and imagination, causing excitement and suggesting vivid images of human nature exalted by emotion into the avenging Fury or the dreadful, inevitable, invincible Fate. His performance of the dual parts in "The Corsican Brothers" was as nearly perfect, in that way, as anything that has been seen. His performance of *Monte Cristo,* though prolix with details and therefore a little tedious,—for he was a prosaic artist in his mechanism, and not accustomed to use much suggestiveness,—contained many of those stormy, thrilling moments. His *Ruy Blas,* in the Third Act; his *Claude Melnotte,* in the Fourth Act; his *Lagardère,* and his *Obenreizer,* in the Alpine scenes, illustrated the special excellence of his acting. In Shakespeare he was not successful, one reason being that he carried into poetical tragedy a colloquial tone and a familiar manner, and thus, in striving to be "natural," he became trivial. He spoke blank verse so as to make it sound like prose, and he invariably laid emphasis on movement, to the destruction of character and poetry. It was his expressed opinion that *Hamlet's* soliloquy on life and death is an impediment to the action of the

tragedy and, therefore, ought to be discarded. He made striking points in *Hamlet's* scene with the *Queen* and in *Hamlet's* killing of *Claudius*. That might have been expected from a nature essentially melodramatic. Those persons who like to see large, fine, true ideals of Shakespeare's conceptions personified in a poetical manner were not impressed by Fechter's Shakespearean efforts. With his romantic ideals in melodrama, and with his effective methods of expressing them, his audience was always pleased.

The American public was not slow to reach a just conclusion as to Fechter's acting. It was seen that he was a great actor in a small field, that he elevated little subjects, and that the illumination of his subject was secondary to the display of himself. There have been, and still are, actors who can express high poetic ideals and in themselves suggest lovely, noble, elevating images of character and conduct, giving high thought a high personality, and wielding the influence of splendid example. Fechter chiefly announced and interpreted his picturesque, spasmodic self. Such an actor could not endure in the esteem of his age, because that sort of nature is not the stuff of which permanent affections come, or on which they anchor. Fechter's name, accordingly, long before his retirement, had ceased to be of much practical value. He was what Garrick used to call "an exotic,"—a bizarre individuality,—not a true and lasting power in dramatic art.

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

CHARLES ALBERT FECHTER

as

Obenreizer, in "No Thoroughfare."

His acting was exemplary in grace and notable for elegance. He acted in French as well as in English, and was finer in the former than the latter. He spoke English fluently, but with a cadence which, at times, was comic. His schooling in English was received from John C. N. Bellew, eminent in his day as a public reader. Fechter's acting was the subject of cordial encomium, published in "The Atlantic Monthly," in 1870, from the pen of Charles Dickens, and his life was enthusiastically sketched by Kate Field. He was a man of genius, and his career might have been one of continuous beneficence and unclouded renown. It is sad to think that such rare faculties and such a capability of usefulness as he possessed should have given so little happiness to their possessor and so little benefit to the world. Fechter, once an idol of fashion in the capitals of France and England, passed away, at fifty-four, in comparative neglect, a disappointed, embittered man, deplored by some, regretted by few. He was intensely selfish, devoured by self-esteem, arrogant and sensual and, though devoted to his art, conscious of no moral purpose to be served in the ministration of it. There are some lives which create love and diffuse kindness. That of Fechter was constantly attended by strife, bitterness, and trouble. Charles Dickens, by whom he was greatly admired, said of him that he had "a perfect genius for quarrelling." The defect was deeper than that. It was a craze of vanity, and it ruined his career.

XX.

JEAN MARGARET DAVENPORT, MRS. LANDER.

1829—1903.

Jean Margaret Davenport (Mrs. Frederick West Lander) was born at Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England, on May 3, 1829. Her father was a lawyer, but he left the Bar for the Stage, and became the manager of the Richmond Theatre, where Jean made her first professional appearance, in 1837, acting *Little Pickle,* in "The Manager's Daughter,"—a piece that is also known as "The Spoiled Child," and, in Dion Boucicault's version, as "The Young Actress." *Little Pickle* was a favorite character with little Jean, and she made a hit in it, as she also did, at the same time, in *King Richard the Third.* It is remembered as an interesting incident that she was the first representative of *Richard* seen in the Richmond Theatre after Edmund Kean's death, and that she wore the *Richard* hat which had been owned and worn by the great actor. Later she fulfilled engagements in several British cities, winning special success at Dublin. In 1838 she came to America, making her first appearance at the National Theatre, in Leonard Street, New York, under the

management of James William Wallack, the Elder. Afterward she played star engagements in other cities. In 1842 she returned to Europe and travelled in Italy and France. Her education, at that time, was conducted by private tutors. In Paris she studied music, under the tuition of Garcia. So signal and excellent, indeed, was the musical talent which she manifested in early life that at one time the question was seriously debated whether she should adopt Music or Drama as a profession. Choosing the latter, she thoroughly schooled herself in its rudiments, and by constant study and practice she steadily and surely rose in efficiency and in reputation. Several of the auspicious successes of her youth were won at the London Olympic Theatre, after her return to England from America. There, in 1845, she played Shakespeare's *Juliet, Julia,* in "The Hunchback," and the *Countess,* in "Love," and there she became a favorite; but serious illness compelled her to retire from the Stage. On her reappearance, after some time, she received a testimonial benefit, under the auspices of the Lord Mayor of London,—a significant token of well-earned popularity. In 1846 she went into Holland, taking an English company, with which she acted at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, and, in Germany, at Hamburg and Hanover. That tour occupied about two years and was remunerative. Indeed, the young actress appears to have aroused, in an unusual degree, the enthusiasm of the Hollanders and Ger-

mans. On her last night at Hamburg the stage was strewn with flowers. At Hanover the theatre was given to her, rent-free. At Amsterdam she was "commanded" to play before the King, as *Julia.* On her return to England, in 1848, she made her appearance as a public reader. Fanny Kemble had not then entered that field, and Miss Davenport soon obtained eminence. Her first reading was given in Oxford. She embellished her Shakespearean readings, when occasion offered, by singing the incidental songs. She was one of the first female actors, subsequent to the time of Mrs. Siddons, who attempted to give readings from Shakespeare. Her second visit to America was made in 1849, and so ample and remunerative was the professional success which she then achieved that she became deeply attached to our country and determined to make it her home. Her father, who had always been her companion and manager, died, at Cincinnati, on July 5, 1851, and, in the following year, she went once more to England, there to settle the affairs of her parent's estate and to study for the next dramatic season. Fresh successes awaited her on her return, twelve months later, to her adopted country. In *Peg Woffington, Adrienne Lecouvreur, Letitia Hardy,* the *Countess,* and *Camille* she made, at that time, a deep impression. Her first visit to California was made in 1855. She was in England in 1856-'57, and again in 1859. On October 12, 1860, at San Francisco, she became the wife

of Frederick West Lander,—then a civil engineer, employed also as a government agent for pacificating the Indians in the Far West. Her married life was happy, but it was brief. At the beginning of the American Civil War her husband joined the Union Army, as a volunteer aide on the Staff of General McClellan; on May 17, 1861, he was made a brigadier general, and on February 14, 1862, in a battle at Blooming Gap, Virginia, he suffered injuries which caused his death, on March 3. He was an intrepid, noble gentleman, and left an unsullied memory. His widow, who, at the time of her marriage, had retired from the Stage, did not resume it for several years, preferring, in the meanwhile, to devote herself to the cause in which her husband's life had been lost. That cause she served as a hospital nurse, in Washington, ministering to the wants of wounded and dying soldiers. On February 5, 1865, Mrs. Lander reappeared, acting at Niblo's Garden, New York, in a drama entitled "Mésalliance." The coming of Adelaide Ristori to America brought a new set of characters into vogue—*Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary Stuart, Queen Marie Antoinette,* etc.—and Mrs. Lander availed herself of that new predilection of popular taste. Her performance of *Queen Elizabeth* was first seen at the National Theatre, Washington, in April, 1867. She was the original representative, in America, of *Marguerite Gauthier,* a part which she named *Camille,*—acting it

in a play that she had adapted from "La Dame aux Camélias," by Alexandre Dumas: her adaptation was "edited" by John Wilkin, an English journalist, and it was first presented by her in Philadelphia. She also was the original representative in America of Legouvé's *Medée,* in English, and of *Colombe,* in Browning's "Colombe's Birthday"; *Peg Woffington,* in Reade's "Masks and Faces," and *Hester Prynne,* in Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter." Her last appearance on the stage was made at the Boston Theatre, January 1, 1877, in "The Scarlet Letter." The later years of her life were passed in retirement, at Washington, where she died, August 3, 1903. The acting of Mrs. Lander was remarkable for thoroughness of impersonation, complete command of the essential implements of histrionic art, a fine intellect, a lovely feminine temperament, peculiar clarity and sweetness of elocution, and the controlling faculty of taste.

XXI.

WILLIAM JAMES FLORENCE.

1831—1891.

The melancholy tidings of the death of William James Florence, who died in Philadelphia, after a brief illness, November 19, 1891, came suddenly, and struck the hearts of his friends not simply with affliction but with dismay. Florence was a man of such vigorous and affluent health that the idea of illness and death was never associated with him. Whoever else might go, he at least, it was thought, would remain, and for many cheerful years would please our fancy and brighten our lives. His spirit was so buoyant and brilliant that it seemed not possible it could ever be dimmed. Yet, in a moment, his light was quenched, there was darkness on his mirth, and we knew that we should hear his pleasant voice no more and see no more the sunshine of his genial face. The loss to the public was great. Few actors within the last sixty years have stood upon a level with Florence, in versatility and charm. His gentleness, simplicity, modesty, affectionate fidelity, ready sympathy, inexhaustible patience, and fine talents

united with his spontaneous drollery to enshrine him in tender affection.

Florence, whose family name was Conlin, was born in Albany, July 26, 1831. When a youth he joined the Murdoch Dramatic Association, and he early gave evidence of extraordinary dramatic talent. On December 9, 1849, he made his first appearance on the regular stage, at the Marshall Theatre, in Richmond, Virginia, where he impersonated *Tobias,* in "The Stranger." Later he met with the usual vicissitudes of a young player. He was a member of various stock companies,—notably that of W. C. Forbes, of the Providence Museum, and that of the once-popular John Nickinson, of Toronto and Quebec—the famous *Haversack* of his period. Still later he joined the company at Niblo's Garden, New York, under the management of William Chippendale and John Sefton, appearing there, May 8, 1850. He also acted at the original Broadway Theatre, under E. A. Marshall's management, and in 1852 he was a member of the company at John Brougham's Lyceum. On January 1, 1853, he married Malvina Pray, sister of the wife of Barney Williams, and in that way those two Irish comedians came to be domestically associated.

At that time Florence wrote several plays, on Irish and Yankee subjects, then popular, and he began to figure as a star,—his wife standing beside him. They appeared at Purdy's National Theatre, June 8, 1853,

and then, and for a long time afterward, they enjoyed much success. Florence had composed many songs of a sprightly character (one of them, called "Bobbing Around," had a sale of more than 100,000 copies), and those songs were sung by his wife, to the delight of the public. The Irish drama served his purpose for many years, but he varied that form of art by occasional resort to burlesque and by incursions into the realm of melodrama. One of his best performances was that of *O'Bryan,* in Brougham's play of "Temptation; or, The Irish Emigrant," with which he often graced the stage of the Winter Garden. In that part he touched the extremes of gentle humor and melting pathos. He was delightfully humorous, also, in *Handy Andy,* and in all the long line of Irish characters that came to the American Stage with the elder Tyrone Power and the elder John Drew. He had exceptional talent for burlesque, which was often manifested in his early days. "Fra Diavolo," "Beppo," "Lalla Rookh," "The Lady of the Lions," and "The Colleen Bawn" were among the burlesques that he produced, and with those he was the pioneer.

Engagements were filled by Mr. and Mrs. Florence, at the outset of their starring career, in many cities of the Republic, and everywhere they met with kindness and honor. Among the plays written by Florence were, "The Irish Princess," "O'Neil the Great," "The Sicilian Bride," "Woman's Wrongs," "Eva," and "The Drunk-

ard's Doom." On April 2, 1856, Mr. and Mrs. Florence visited England, and appeared at Drury Lane Theatre, where they at once found favor. The performance of the *Yankee Gal* by Mrs. Florence aroused positive enthusiasm—for it was new, and Mrs. Florence was the first American comic actress who had appeared on the English Stage. More than two hundred representations of the part were given at that time. Florence was accustomed to say that his fortunes were greatly benefited by his success in London, and he habitually spoke with earnest gratitude of the kindness that he received there. From that time onward he enjoyed almost incessant prosperity. A tour of the English provincial cities followed his London season. He acted at Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast, and Dublin, and both his wife and himself became favorites,—so that their songs were sung and whistled in the streets, wherever they went.

In 1861, having returned to America, Florence played some of the parts which had been made popular by the famous comedian William Evans Burton,—who died in 1860,—in Wallack's Theatre, among them being *Toodle* and *Cuttle.* At a later period he made it a custom to lease Wallack's Theatre during the summer, and there he produced several burlesques. In 1863, at the Winter Garden, he offered Tom Taylor's play "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," and acted *Bob Brierly,* which was one of the best exploits of his life. In 1867,

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

W. J. FLORENCE
as
Obenreizer, in "No Thoroughfare."

Wallack's old theatre being then called the Broadway and managed by Barney Williams, he brought to that house the comedy of "Caste" and presented it with a distribution of the parts that has not been equalled. The production of that play was the one blot on his career—for he obtained it surreptitiously and, though the law could not touch him, he had no right to use it. The actors were Mrs. Chanfrau, Mrs. Gilbert, Mrs. Florence, William Davidge, Owen Marlowe, Edward Lamb, and Florence—who played *George D'Alroy.* In 1868 he presented Wilkie Collins's "No Thoroughfare" (Collins, more than Dickens, was the author of that story), and enacted *Obenreizer,*—a performance which established his rank among the leading actors of the time. In 1876 he made a remarkable hit as the *Hon. Bardwell Slote,* in the play of "The Mighty Dollar," by Benjamin E. Woolff. That was the last important new play that he produced. During the last fifteen years of his life he offered selections from his accepted repertory. For a time he was associated with Joseph Jefferson,—to whom he brought a strength that was deeply valued and appreciated, equally by that famous actor and by the public,—acting *Sir Lucius O'Trigger,* in "The Rivals," and *Zekiel Homespun,* in "The Heir-at-Law."

The supreme faculty of Florence was that of impersonation. He was imaginative and sympathetic, his style was flexible, and he had an unerring instinct of

effect. The secret of his success lay in his profound feeling, guided by good taste and perfect self-control. He was an actor of humanity, and he diffused an irresistible charm of truth and gentleness. His place was his own and it has not been filled. I wrote his epitaph, in these words:

Here Rest the Ashes of
WILLIAM JAMES FLORENCE,
Comedian.

His Copious and Varied Dramatic Powers, together with the Abundant Graces of his Person, combined with Ample Professional Equipment and a Temperament of Peculiar Sensibility and Charm, made him one of the Best and Most Successful Actors of his Time, alike in Comedy and in Serious Drama. He ranged easily from Handy Andy to Bob Brierly, and from Cuttle to Obenreizer. In Authorship, alike of Plays, Stories, Music, and Song, he was Inventive, Versatile, Facile, and Graceful. In Art Admirable; in Life Gentle; he was widely known, and he was known only to be loved.

HE WAS BORN IN ALBANY, N. Y.,
JULY 26, 1831.
HE DIED IN PHILADELPHIA, PENN.,
NOVEMBER 19, 1891.

By Virtue cherished, by Affection mourned,
By Honor hallowed and by Fame adorned,
Here FLORENCE sleeps, and o'er his sacred rest
Each word is tender and each thought is blest.
Long, for his loss, shall pensive Mem'ry show,
Through Humor's mask, the visage of her woe,
Day breathe a darkness that no sun dispels,
And Night be full of whispers and farewells;

While patient Kindness, shadow-like and dim,
Droops in its loneliness, bereft of him,
Feels its sad doom and sure decadence nigh,—
For how should Kindness live, when he could die!

The eager heart, that felt for every grief,
The bounteous hand, that loved to give relief,
The honest smile, that blessed where'er it lit,
The dew of pathos and the sheen of wit,
The sweet, blue eyes, the voice of melting tone,
That made all hearts as gentle as his own,
The Actor's charm, supreme in royal thrall,
That ranged through every field and shone in all—
For these must Sorrow make perpetual moan,
Bereaved, benighted, hopeless, and alone?
Ah, no; for Nature does no act amiss,
And Heaven were lonely but for souls like this.

XXII.

JOHN EDWARD McCULLOUGH.

1832—1885.

John McCullough was born at Blakes, near Coleraine, Londonderry, Ireland, on November 14, 1832. His parents were situated in humble circumstances and were poor. His father, James McCullough, was a "small farmer." His mother, Mary, died in 1844, leaving her son John, then a lad of twelve, and three daughters, Jane, Mary, and Elizabeth. Their father was unable to provide for those children, and shortly after the mother's death they were obliged to seek their fortune in America. In the spring of 1847 John and his sister Jane came to this country, and having a cousin, named John McCullough, in Philadelphia, they went to that city, where young John, walking in Front Street, saw the name of his relative on a sign, and, entering the house, claimed kindred and was acknowledged. His cousin was a chair-maker, and in the business of chair-making John McCullough was employed. His father and the sisters Mary and Elizabeth followed to America, shortly after that time. The father, an unsuccessful man, but independent in spirit, worked, all the rest of his life, as a farmer, in

the neighborhood of Philadelphia, seeming to prefer an humble station, and declining to accept aid, even from his son, in the days of prosperity which eventually arrived. His death occurred in Moorestown, Burlington County, New Jersey, in 1878. He is remembered as a small, thin man, who spoke with a brogue. He did not maintain intimate relations with his children. He was a faithful worker and an honest man, but he had no ambition, and he was of a reticent, inoperative character. Those ancestral peculiarities are to be noted for whatever they may happen to signify. The sisters of John McCullough were married in America. Elizabeth became the wife of Thomas Young, and died at Dunmore, Pennsylvania, in 1869. Mary became the wife of James Smith, and died at Statington, Pennsylvania. Jane was married to John Wirth, and became a resident of Dunmore. John McCullough, shortly after he came to Philadelphia, made the acquaintance of Letitia McClair, daughter of Samuel McClair, of Germantown, and to her he was married, April 8, 1849. Two children were born of that marriage—James McCullough, July 4, 1850, and William F. Johnson McCullough, December 2, 1860. The latter died on February 25, 1886. This second son was named for a friend who knew McCullough throughout the struggles of his early manhood, and stood by him, through all vicissitudes, till the last.

When John McCullough, a youth of fifteen, came

to America he could read, but he could not write. He had received no education, and he was ignorant of literature and art. Dying thirty-eight years later (1885), he had become a man of large and varied mental acquirements, a considerable scholar in the dramatic profession, and the most conspicuous heroic actor of his time, on the American Stage. Such a career, beginning in obscurity and penury and ending in culture, honorable prosperity, and fame, is extraordinary, and in dramatic annals it makes John McCullough a memorable name.

No ancestor of his was on the stage. Dramatic faculty, however, is one of the peculiar attributes of the Irish race. In McCullough it was developed by the accident of his meeting with a "stage-struck" workman in the shop of his cousin, the Philadelphia chair-maker. That person, whose "spoutings" and whose general vagaries had at first been suggestive of lunacy, made him acquainted with the tragedy of "King Richard III.," stimulated in him a taste for reading Shakespeare, acquainted him with the business of rehearsal, introduced him to a theatrical society, and finally took him to the theatre itself. The first dramatic performance that he witnessed was, according to his recollection, one of Shiel's tragedy of "The Apostate," given in the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia. From that time onward he read with avidity every play that he could obtain, and, without the distinct intention of becoming an

actor,—probably with no view to the future, but only from natural relish for this pursuit,—devoted his mind to the study of acting. One of his first steps toward the Stage, taken at that period, was his affiliation with the Boothenian Dramatic Association, of Philadelphia, a local club which held meetings and gave performances in the fourth story of an abandoned warehouse, once a sugar refinery, and of which the principal spirit was Lemuel R. Shewell, in later years an actor well known throughout the chief cities of the United States. McCullough took lessons in elocution from Lemuel White, a teacher of that art, and at the house of his tutor he became acquainted with various persons, from whom he received not only sympathy but instruction, and through whose kindly and judicious efforts he obtained substantially all the education it was his lot to enjoy. His experience, at that time, led him to branches of learning apart from the Stage. One of the works that he read was Chambers' "Encyclopædia of English Literature," and in less than a month he had absorbed it, becoming so familiar with its contents that he could descant on the British authors as if he had been trained exclusively in the study of them,—so eager was his zeal for knowledge and so retentive was the memory in which he stored it.

McCullough's theatrical career, beginning in 1857 and ending in 1884, covered a period of twenty-seven years. His first engagement was made at the Arch Street The-

atre, Philadelphia, under the management of William Wheatley and John Drew, and his first appearance there was made on August 15, 1857, as *Thomas,* in "The Belle's Stratagem." His rise in the dramatic profession was gradual. In the earlier days of the American Stage it was more difficult to win position than it has become in contemporary times of speculative theatrical management, when all the arts of advertising are pressed into the business of manufacturing fame. Every step of the way had then to be made with toilsome effort. There were many obstacles to be surmounted and many hardships to be endured. The histories of such actors as Cooper, Forrest, Booth, A. A. Addams, Edward L. Davenport, and Joseph Jefferson teach the same lesson of persistent effort and of patience under privation. McCullough, in his quest of professional recognition, had the usual trying experience; but he was in earnest, and he proved the integrity of his talents, the force of his character, and the sincerity of his devotion by a steadfast adherence to that service of the Drama which was the purpose of his life. His novitiate at the Arch Street Theatre lasted until the summer of 1860, when E. L. Davenport, then manager of the Howard Athenæum, Boston, engaged him at that theatre, where he remained for one season—that of 1860-'61. In the ensuing season he was again in Philadelphia, engaged at the Walnut Street Theatre, under the management of Mrs. Garretson. He had attracted the notice of

Edwin Forrest, who chanced to be in need of an actor to play the parts second to his own, and that eminent tragedian obtained his release from Mrs. Garretson and gave him an engagement for leading business. That was "the tide which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." McCullough's first appearance in association with Forrest was made in Boston, in October, 1861, in the character of *Pythias.* His line of parts then included *Laertes, Macduff, Iago, Edgar, Richmond, Icilius,* and *Titus.* He also coöperated with Forrest in plays that were the exclusive property of that actor—"Metamora," "The Gladiator," "Jack Cade," and "The Broker of Bogota." Later, when Forrest revived "Coriolanus," November, 1863, at Niblo's Garden, New York, McCullough acted *Cominius.* From the time of his engagement with Forrest he had a clear field and he advanced in the open sunshine of success.

An incident of his early life on the stage is significant of his solid character and inveterate purpose. He more than once referred to it, in my hearing, as having had a marked influence upon his fortunes. While at the Howard Athenæum he was suddenly summoned to play, at short notice, an important and formidable part. Davenport, then the star, had been taken ill, and could not appear. The character was *Robert Landry,* in "The Dead Heart,"—one of the longest parts in modern romantic drama. McCullough was

directed, at noon, to be in readiness to go on and *read* it, at night. He took the part home, committed it to memory within a few hours, and, without previous explanation to anybody in the theatre, he went on, at night, *letter perfect,* and played *Robert Landry* in such a way as to make a hit. Those facts came to the knowledge of Forrest and aroused an interest in the young actor which soon afterward took a practical form.

McCullough's professional life after he joined Forrest was not more eventful than is usual with a leading man in a theatrical stock company. He travelled through the country, season after season, playing seconds to the famous tragedian, and constantly gaining in experience and popularity. At that time he was much under the influence of the style of Forrest, and, indeed, he habitually imitated his leader,—as was the injudicious custom of many young actors of the period, and it was not easily to be avoided by an actor who lived and labored in constant association with that strong and singular personality. In later years McCullough discarded the Forrestian style, but he could, at will, give astonishing imitations of Forrest's peculiarities, and he sometimes did so, with humorous effect. In 1866 he accompanied Forrest in a trip to California, where he was received with uncommon favor, and where he found many friends. Some of those friends were wealthy citizens of San Francisco, and he had not long been

there before it was proposed by them that he should remain, as the manager of the California Theatre, in partnership with Lawrence Barrett. The plan was sanctioned by Forrest, the enterprise was carried into effect, and McCullough remained on the Pacific coast for eight successive seasons. The history of the California Theatre would contain a brilliant chapter in his career. Plays were magnificently mounted there, the professional scholarship of Lawrence Barrett proving of signal service, and Barrett and McCullough filled engagements of uncommon profit. Their partnership lasted until November, 1870, when it was dissolved by the amicable withdrawal of Barrett, and McCullough remained alone in the management. It was in the California Theatre that he first acted *Virginius,* and, one by one, added to his repertory the other great parts to which he had formerly played seconds under the leadership of Forrest. He remained connected with the California Theatre until 1875, when, in the ruin of the banker Ralston, he suffered a heavy loss which led to his retirement from it. It never had been, and it never became, his ambition to be a theatrical manager. At a time when, temporarily, he lost his voice, in Boston (1876), he expressed to me, in touching language, his grave apprehension of being compelled to relinquish his career as an actor, and "sink to the level of theatrical management."

On May 4, 1874, McCullough made his first appear-

ance as a star actor in New York, coming forward as *Spartacus,* in "The Gladiator." He acted at Booth's Theatre until May 30. He was seen as *Richelieu* and *Hamlet,* and he participated, as *Falconbridge,* in a revival of "King John," which was effected on May 25. At the end of the engagement he went to California, to attend to the interests of his theatre in San Francisco, but in the course of the summer he returned, and when Boucicault's play of "Belle Lamar" was brought out at Booth's Theatre, August 10, 1874, he acted in it, as *Colonel Bligh.* That theatre was then under the management of Henry Jarrett and H. D. Palmer. On September 14 those managers produced an altered version of Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," made by Boucicault, and McCullough acted *Pierre,*—always a favorite part with him. On September 19 he took a benefit and said farewell, and he did not appear in New York again till April 2, 1877. The interval was passed in the fulfilment of ambitious, laborious, and lucrative engagements in many other cities. In the fall of 1874 he went on the Western circuit and visited New Orleans, proceeding thence to San Francisco, in December, and re-appearing at the California Theatre, where, in an engagement of four weeks, the receipts for his performances were $36,000. He remained in San Francisco till the autumn of 1875, when he once more came to the East, and this time he met with extraordinary success in Washington, where, on Decem-

ber 12, at the National Theatre, a special demonstration was made in his honor, and his performance of *Virginius* was attended by the President of the United States and the Cabinet. At Christmas, 1875, he was in New Orleans, acting at the Varieties Theatre, under the management of Clifton W. Tayleure. In February, 1876, he won great success in Boston, where, on February 9, playing *Virginius* for the first time in that city, he gained some of the brightest laurels of his professional life. Later he played a round of parts at Philadelphia, in the Arch Street Theatre. On March 27, 1876, he re-appeared in San Francisco, as *Virginius,* and was welcomed with enthusiasm. 1876 was the season of Edwin Booth's famous Southern tour, which, under John T. Ford's management, lasted from January 3 to March 3, and thereafter was continued by Booth, who first acted in Chicago and then went to San Francisco, where McCullough gave him a royal reception, and, in order to augment his success, acted in conjunction with him, playing such parts as *De Mauprat* and *Richmond.* The engagement was the most remunerative that had ever been known on the Dramatic, as distinguished from the Operatic, Stage of America. In January, 1877, McCullough played a round of parts in Chicago, and in February he appeared at the Boston Museum, where, in two weeks, he proved so popular that his share of profits was $2,800. The theatre also received a large profit; and the engagement

was noted, at the time, as the most successful filled in that house for many years. On April 2, he appeared again in New York, and it was then seen that he had made surprising advancement in his art. He acted at Booth's Theatre as *Virginius,* and after seven performances of that part, in an engagement lasting till April 27, he performed likewise *Richelieu, Richard the Third, Othello, Iago, Spartacus, Metamora,* and *King Lear.* Frederick Warde played seconds; Mme. Ponisi acted *Emilia,* and Maude Granger appeared as *Virginia* and as *Desdemona.* Warde distinguished himself as *Icilius,* and J. H. Taylor presented *Dentatus.* For his benefit, on April 27, McCullough acted *Othello,* and at the close of the performance a silver laurel wreath, the gift of New York friends, was publicly presented to him, on the stage, and was received by him with a speech of singular manliness and delicate taste. On March 13, 1877, at the Southern Hotel, St. Louis, many leading citizens of that place gave a banquet in his honor, and congratulations flowed to him from every part of the land. On February 9, 1878, he received the compliment of a dinner at the Lotos Club, of New York. On November 9, 1878, he was the honored guest of citizens of Washington, at a public banquet at Willard's Hotel, at which Gen. W. T. Sherman presided and James G. Blaine was the principal orator.

At the St. Louis festival the following inscriptions were displayed on the printed programme of exercises:

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JOHN EDWARD McCULLOUGH.

September, 1873.

"Untried and new we saw thy rising star
And hailed the brightness of its early rays;
The light discerned, the promise from afar,
Greeting its glimmer through the morning haze.

January, 1875.

"Brighter it grew as we beheld its rise,
Foretelling all the greatness that should be,
And watched its progress with our partial eyes,
Assured that it must rule the galaxy.

March, 1877.

"Full-orbed and brilliant now thy glories shine,
Illuming all the Drama's wide expanse;
Thou hast thy place secured—the zenith thine—
The whole world's space included in thy glance."

Messages of kindness, on that occasion, reached the actor from Edwin Adams, Adelaide Neilson, Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Booth, and other cherished friends. The Knights of St. Patrick sent a scroll, inscribed as follows:

"St. Louis, March 13, 1877.—Salve et vale! The Knights of St. Patrick to John McCullough, tragedian:

All hail to the actor whose genius sublime
Interprets the Poet who wrote for all time;
While Hamlet, Othello, and Lear, the discrowned,
Make the stage with the woes of the Drama resound,
The name of McCullough shall blend with the strain
And never shall history rend them in twain."

On October 12, 1877, performances for the benefit of Edwin Adams, then on his death-bed, took place at the Academy of Music in New York, and McCullough participated in them. A close friendship had for many years existed between Adams and himself, and, indeed, it would be difficult to imagine two human beings more accordant in generosity of temperament and gentleness of life. Adams died on October 28, 1877, and it was McCullough who selected the lines, from Shakespeare, that are inscribed on his gravestone, in Philadelphia,—lines that are as expressive for the one friend as for the other:

> "His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'"

McCullough took part also in a performance for the benefit of the comedian John Brougham, which was given in the Academy of Music, New York, on January 17, 1878, playing the *Moor* in the Third Act of "Othello." On January 21, that year, he performed at the Park Theatre, Brooklyn, and on February 7 he acted at the Boston Theatre as *Coriolanus.* His next star engagement in New York began on April 22, 1878, at the Grand Opera House, and in its third week he signalized the occasion by acting, for the first time in the metropolis, *Lucius Brutus,* in "The Fall of Tarquin." In the spring of that year his professional affairs had been

placed under the direction of William M. Conner, who proved for him an excellent manager and a wise friend. Under Conner's direction he appeared at Syracuse, giving seven successive performances there, and receiving $500 for each performance. The receipts for the one week were $4,200. The receipts on his benefit night, when he played *Virginius,* were $1,253. It pleased him to recall, as a contrast with that success and as a sign of growing popularity, that when first he acted in Syracuse the receipts were only $128. In May, 1878, he came again to the Grand Opera House, New York, and acted several parts, including *King Lear, Damon,* and *Lucius Brutus.* On May 22 he appeared at the Boston Theatre, in association with Mary Anderson, acting *Claude Melnotte,* to her *Pauline,* —that performance being for a benefit. On May 24 he was seen at Booth's Theatre as *Brutus,* in "Julius Cæsar," a part in which his acting was beautiful, and which he then played for the benefit of Frederick B. Warde. He took part in another benefit on June 3, at Washington, and on September 5 in still another, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, where he acted *Ingomar,* to Mary Anderson's *Parthenia:* the performance was given to help the plague-stricken people of the South, then suffering the ravages of pestilence. McCullough's next important engagement in New York began on December 16, at the Grand Opera House, where he revived "Coriolanus." On February

3, 1879, at the Boston Theatre, he effected a revival of the old play of "Pizarro," and acted *Rolla,* performing with great dignity in the declamatory portions of the part, and with picturesque vigor and effective pathos in the closing scene. During his stay in Boston he appeared as *Brutus, Virginius, King Richard the Third,* and *Cardinal Wolsey.* From Boston he went to New Orleans. In the summer he rested, at Saratoga. In November he acted at the National Theatre, Washington, and again enjoyed great success. When the year 1878 drew toward a close he was roaming through the towns of New England. At Christmas he was in Brooklyn, and he there brought out "The Honeymoon," and acted *Duke Aranza.* Two performances of *Spartacus* given there by him on Christmas Day cleared $4,720. Such facts serve to show the steady and sure increase of his popularity.

During the season of 1879-'80 McCullough was especially prosperous. Before it was half over he had cleared upward of $20,000. During the first three months of 1880 he travelled on the Southern circuit and went into Texas, and subsequently he went as far west as Omaha. On March 6 he received public honors at Memphis, and he presented a standard to the Chickasaw Guards, of which military organization he was an honorary member. On May 31 he acted at Wallack's Theatre, New York, for the benefit of the fine comedian William R. Floyd. On June 5 he sailed, aboard the

Britannic, for England,—E. A. Sothern, John T. Raymond, and Rose Coghlan being passengers on the same ship. That was Sothern's final voyage from America to his native land, where, on January 20, 1881, he died. It was on that trip that McCullough paid a visit to his birthplace, where he was received with interest and kindness. While in London he made arrangements for acting there, in the season of 1881. He sailed from Liverpool August 5, and on arriving home he began the new season, September 5, at Utica. From November 15 to December 11 he was acting at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York. For his benefit, December 10, he played *Lucius Brutus*. There were 837 persons in the gallery alone, and the receipts were $1,637. In his speech before the curtain McCullough said: "Whatever may become of me, whether I rise or sink, it is a comfort to reflect that the noble art of which I am a humble representative will remain and flourish as long as human nature exists." During the remainder of the season he was in the West and South, and when it closed, April 2, 1881, he had acted in thirty-four cities. He had arranged to act in London, and on April 4 he received the tribute of a farewell banquet at Delmonico's, New York. In his speech that night McCullough said: "If I succeed, I shall be grateful but not unduly elated. If I fail, I shall not be soured by disappointment. My hope is that I may prove myself not altogether unworthy of

the great kindness that has been shown toward me in America, and of the good will and good opinion that have been so touchingly expressed on this occasion." On April 9 he sailed for England, and on April 18 he appeared in London, at Drury Lane Theatre, as *Virginius*. The engagement lasted till May 21, and the tragedian was seen in *Virginius* and *Othello*. His social popularity in London was extraordinary, but critical opinion was divided, relative to his acting. "The Telegraph" declared: "A finer representative of *Virginius* the character can never have had." In his farewell speech McCullough said: "I came to you a stranger, and now I feel as if I had known you for years. You have taught me the significance and true meaning of British fair-play." He returned to America in September and began the season of 1881-'82 at St. Paul, going over much the same ground as before. On November 14, 1881, he began an engagement of six weeks at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, as *Virginius*. "Ingomar" was produced later, with Kate Forsythe as *Parthenia*. On November 29 he acted *King Lear*. On December 8, for the benefit of a movement which had been undertaken to provide an actors' memorial of the poet Poe, whose parents were actors, he played at the Union Square Theatre, New York, in one act of "King Richard III." On December 12 that year, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, he brought out "The Bondman," a tragic play by Lewis Wingfield, on the subject of

Jack Cade's rebellion. The engagement ended on December 31, and then he went on still another long tour of the South and West. On May 31, 1882, he appeared at the Boston Theatre, in association with Mary Anderson, acting in "Ingomar," for a benefit. His regular season of 1882-'83 was opened at St. Paul, September 4, and he visited Chicago, St. Louis, and other Western cities, and came to the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on November 13. In the course of that engagement he was seen as *Master Walter* and as *Hamlet,* and he closed it, on December 9, with *Damon,* proceeding then, by way of Albany, into New England, and going as far to the northeast as Portland. On April 9, 1883, he made his re-entrance in New York, at Niblo's Garden, and he there remained till April 23. At about that time he began to show signs of serious illness, and he was especially depressed and miserable at Cincinnati, during the Dramatic Festival which was held there, April 29 to May 4,—in the course of which he acted *Brutus,* in "Julius Cæsar"; *Othello,* and *Master Walter.* On May 7 he retired to the residence of his friend John Carson, at Quincy, Illinois, where he passed some time, in a gallant but hopeless struggle against the encroachments of disease. At that time he suspected that he was going mad, and his suffering was great. He rallied, however, and on August 20, 1883, he entered on a new professional season, at Denver. At Christmas he was acting in

Philadelphia, and as the year closed he seemed to be convalescent. Early in January, 1884, he was acting in Boston, and on March 3 he appeared at the Star Theatre, New York, beginning his last engagement there. Three weeks of it were devoted to *Virginius* and *Spartacus,* and one week to *Brutus, Othello, Spartacus, Virginius,* and *Richard the Third.* It ended on March 29, and McCullough ended his tour on April 5 at the Novelty Theatre, Williamsburg. It was evident then, to those who saw him act, that his powers were broken. On June 29 he sailed for Germany, seeking relief from his malady at the springs of Carlsbad, but the expedition was fruitless. He returned by way of England, passing a few days in London. It was evident on his arrival home that his mind had grown feeble, and that he was considerably advanced on the downward road to death. He resumed his work, but he could not carry it forward. The final collapse occurred at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, on September 29, 1884, and he retired forever from the Stage. On June 27, 1885, he was placed in a private ward of the lunatic asylum at Bloomingdale, New York, where he remained till October 25, when he was removed to his home in Philadelphia. He died there, on November 8, 1885, and was laid in the grave in Mount Moriah Cemetery, near that city.

The following is a list of the principal parts and plays that were included in McCullough's repertory:

PARTS.	PLAYS.
Virginius	"Virginius"
Othello	"Othello"
Lucius Brutus	"The Fall of Tarquin"
Marcus Brutus	"Julius Cæsar"
Iago	"Othello"
Macbeth	"Macbeth"
King Lear	"King Lear"
Coriolanus	"Coriolanus"
Spartacus	"The Gladiator"
Benedick	"Much Ado About Nothing"
Shylock	"The Merchant of Venice"
Petruchio	"Taming of the Shrew"
Falconbridge	"King John"
Richard the Third	"Richard III."
Cardinal Wolsey	"Henry VIII."
Hamlet	"Hamlet"
Pierre	"Venice Preserved"
Richelieu	"Richelieu"
Jack Cade	"Jack Cade"
The Stranger	"The Stranger"
St. Pierre	"The Wife"
Damon	"Damon and Pythias"
Metamora	"Metamora"
Claude Melnotte	"The Lady of Lyons"
Duke Aranza	"The Honeymoon"
Ingomar	"Ingomar"
Rolla	"Pizarro"
Alfred Evelyn	"Money"
Master Walter	"The Hunchback"
Febro	"The Broker of Bogota"

In McCullough's character the qualities which first attracted interest were modesty, simplicity, and manliness. Animated by a distinct professional purpose and always resolute in its pursuit, he possessed in an eminent degree the calmness of a man who understands himself and the object of his life, and who means to exercise a firm and wise control over the inward resources of

his nature and all outward aids to his career. From first to last his demeanor toward the world was gentle and propitiatory. He was aware of the deficiency of his education. He knew his defects. But, more than this, he had a perfectly distinct perception of what is due to others, together with a high and just sense of the magnitude of the dramatic art, the difficulties to be conquered in its pursuit, and the nature and value of success in its service. A certain sweet humility was natural to him. He never vaunted himself. He never was unduly exalted. He took success, as he took failure, with meekness. That was not an affectation, for he knew his powers were uncommon, and he was fully and gladly aware of the triumphs he had achieved. But a strain of modesty ran through his conduct, because it was inherent in his character. He knew what other actors had done, and he knew there were other heights to be gained, higher than any which had been reached by him. Allied to his modesty and perhaps resultant from it, there was in his character the attribute of thoroughness. He did not wish merely to be *called* a great actor; he wished to *be* a great actor; and, thus animated, he studied and labored at all times to make the utmost that could be made of his faculties and occasions. He left nothing to chance. He observed every detail. He considered and planned every step of his way. He always knew what he wished to accomplish in dramatic art, and he always had in mind a dis-

tinct and practical method by which to accomplish it. He was direct in his art because direct in his nature. Persons who saw him on the stage, equally with persons who were brought into contact with him in real life, were invariably impressed by his simplicity and truth. Experience of the world, indeed, had taught him the necessity of being politic in the direction of his affairs. He was not a simpleton, he was only simple. He did not 'wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at'; he wore it in his bosom, and it was an honest, tender, manly heart, sympathetic with goodness, resentful of evil, charitable and generous, faithful in affection, and easily moved to pity and to kindness. Such a nature offers no complexities for analysis. It is rooted in elemental principles of humanity and virtue. Such a man may make errors, may commit faults, may reveal occasional weakness, may be led astray by passion; but he remains essentially a lovable human being, and he is readily and rightly understood. McCullough had that fortune, and he had it for that reason. Wherever he went he carried the charm of personal worth, and he found instant sympathy. He was naturally cheerful. His rugged health and affluent physical strength harmonized with his temperament and augmented its effect. His bearing and movements had the composure which comes of power. His smile was equally indicative of pleasure in life and kindness toward others. He was an attractive man to children, to all weak or help-

less persons, to all such natures as lack self-reliance and therefore turn instinctively toward strength and sweetness. He had a protective air. Safety and comfort seemed to enter with him, wherever he came. He was a sturdy, smiling reality of active goodness, and his presence encouraged those persons who work and cheered those persons who suffer. Whatever of policy he employed in the conduct of life was not craft; it was the prudence which had been enforced upon him by the monitions of experience; and perhaps if he had used more of that sort of policy, if he had guarded and fostered his powers and interests and been less heedless and lavish of resources which he seemed to regard as herculean and inexhaustible, his end would not have come so soon, nor in a way so lamentable, desolate, and wretched.

McCullough's acting was essentially the flower of his character, as thus denoted. He played many parts, but the parts in which he was best,—in which his nature was liberated and his triumph supreme,—were distinctively those which rest upon the basis of the genial human heart and proceed in the realm of the affections. He displayed artistic resources, intellectual intention, and sometimes a subtle professional skill, in such characters as *Hamlet* and *Richelieu,* but he never was entirely in sympathy with them, and he did not make them his own. He was an heroic actor. He towered into splendor in such situations as are provided by the clos-

ing scenes in Payne's "Brutus," the Forum Scene in "Virginius," and the Scaffold Scene in "Damon and Pythias." He was the manly friend, to whom life and all the possessions of the world are nothing when weighed in the balance against fidelity to love. He was the fond and tender father, whose great strength became a sweet and yielding feebleness in the presence of his gentle daughter. He was the simple, truthful, affectionate, high-minded man, whose soul could exist only in honor. To ideals of that kind he gave perfect expression, and for an essential nobleness and manliness such as stimulate human hearts to a renewed devotion to duty and a fervid allegiance to high ideals of character and conduct he will be remembered as long as anything is remembered in the history of the Stage.

"VIRGINIUS."

There is no greater gratification to the intellect than the sense of power and completeness in itself or the perception of power and completeness in others. Those attributes were in McCullough's acting and were at the heart of its charm. The most imposing and affecting of his embodiments were *Virginius* and *King Lear*. The massive grandeur of adequacy in *Virginius* was a great excellence. The rugged, weather-beaten plainness of it was full of authority and did not in the least detract from its poetic purity and ideal grace. The simplicity of it was like the lovely innocence that

shines through the ingenuous eyes of childhood, while its majesty was like the sheen of white marble in the sunlight. It was a high, serious, noble work; yet,—although the actor, wisely and rightly, never tried to apply a "natural" treatment to artificial conditions or to speak blank verse in a colloquial manner,—it was made sweetly human by a delicate play of humor in the earlier scenes, and by a deep glow of paternal tenderness that suffused every part of it and created an absorbing sense of complete sincerity. Common life was not made commonplace life by McCullough. The intention to be real,—the intention to love, suffer, feel, defend, and avenge, as a man of actual life would do,—was obvious, through its harmonious fulfilment; yet the realism was shorn of all triteness, all animal excess, all those ordinary attributes which are right in nature, and wrong, because obstructive, in the art that is nature's interpretation.

Just as the true landscape is the harmonious blending of selected natural effects, so the true dramatic embodiment is the crystallization of selected attributes in any given type of human nature, shown in selected phases of natural condition. McCullough did not present *Virginius* brushing his hair or paying *Virginia's* school-bills; yet he suggested him, clearly and beautifully, in the sweet domestic repose and paternal benignity of his usual life,—making thus a background of loveliness, on which to throw, in lines of living light,

the terrible image of his agonizing sacrifice. And when the inevitable moment came for his dread act of compulsory slaughter it was the moral grandeur, the heart-breaking paternal agony, and the overwhelming pathos of the deed that his art diffused,—not the "gashed stab," the blood, the physical convulsion, the revolting animal shock. Neither was there drooling, or dirt, or physical immodesty, or any other attribute of that class of the natural concomitants of insanity, in the subsequent delirium.

A perfect and holy love is, in one aspect of it, a sadder thing to see than the profoundest grief. Misery, at its worst, is at least final, and for that there is the relief of death. But love, in its sacred exaltation,—the love of the parent for the child,—is so fair a mark for affliction that the observer of human life can hardly view it without a shudder of apprehensive dread. That kind of love was incarnated in McCullough's embodiment of *Virginius,* and that same nameless thrill of fear was imparted by its presence,—even before the tragedian, with an exquisite intuition of art, made *Virginius* convey his vague presentiment, not admitted but quickly thrust aside, of some unknown doom of peril and agony. There was, in fact, more heart in that single piece of acting than in any hundred of the most pathetic performances of the "natural" school, and all the time it was maintained at the lofty level of classic grace. It would be impossible to overstate the excel-

lence of all McCullough did and said, in the Forum Scene,—the noble serenity of the poise, the grace of the demeanor, the terrible intensity of the mood, the heart-rending play of the emotions, the overwhelming delirium of the climax. Throughout the subsequent exceedingly difficult portraiture of shattered reason the actor never, for an instant, lost his firm grasp on the sympathy of his hearers. Every heart knew the presence of a nature that could feel all that *Virginius* felt and suffer and act all that *Virginius* suffered and acted; and, beyond this, in his wonderful investiture of the mad scenes with the alternate vacancy and lamentable and forlorn anguish of a special kind of insanity, every judge of the dramatic art recognized the governing touch of a splendid intellect, imperial over all its resources and instruments of art.

Virginius as embodied by McCullough was a man of noble and refined nature; lovely in life; cruelly driven into madness; victorious over dishonor, by a deed of terrible heroism; triumphant over crime, even in forlorn and pitiable dethronement and ruin; and, finally, released by the celestial mercy of death: and this was shown by a poetic method so absolute that *Virginius* was kept a hero to the imagination, whether of scholar or peasant, and a white ideal of manly purity and grace to that great faculty of taste which is the umpire and arbiter of the human mind.

The sustained poetic exaltation of that embodiment,

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

JOHN McCULLOUGH
as
Virginius, in "Virginius."

its unity as a grand and sympathetic personage, and its exquisite simplicity, were the qualities that gave it vitality in popular interest, and through those it possesses permanence in theatrical history. There were many subtle beauties in it. The profound tenderness, back of the sweet dignity, in the betrothal of *Virginia* to *Icilius;* the dim, transitory, evanescent touch of presentiment, in the forecasting of the festival joys that are expected to succeed the war; the self-abnegation and simple homeliness of grief for the dead *Dentatus;* the alternate shock of freezing terror and cry of joy, in the Camp Scene,—closing with that potent repression and thrilling outburst, "Prudence, but no patience!"—a situation and words that require at once splendid manliness of self-command and an ominous and savage vehemence; the glad, saving, comforting cry to *Virginia,* "Is she here?"—that cry which never failed to precipitate a gush of joyous tears; the rapt preoccupation and the exquisite music of voice with which he said, "I never saw thee look so like thy mother, in all my life"; the majesty of his demeanor in the forum; the look that saw the knife; the mute parting glance at *Servia;* the accents of broken reason, but unbroken and everlasting love, that called upon the name of the poor, slain *Virginia;* and then the last low wail of the dying father, conscious and happy in the great boon of death,—those, as McCullough gave them, were points of impressive beauty, invested with the ever-varying

light and shadow of a delicate artistic treatment, and all the while animated with passionate sincerity. The perfect finish of the performance, indeed, was little less than marvellous, when viewed with reference to the ever-increasing volume of power and the evident reality of afflicting emotion with which the part was carried. If acting ever could do good, the acting of McCullough did. If ever dramatic art concerns the public welfare, it is when such an ideal of manliness and heroism is presented in such an image of nobility.

"DAMON AND PYTHIAS."

It is the Nature, not the Art, after all, that conquers the world,—the Nature, breathing and shining through the Art, and by the Art revealed,—compelling homage to that which is highest in human power and noblest in the potentialities of its achievement. An actor can manifest rare and fine talent in many directions, and win respect and command admiration for the thoroughness and skill with which he portrays identities foreign to his own, but he can reveal himself at his best only in the interpretation of an ideal identity that he loves because it enlists his spontaneous sympathy, arouses his deepest emotions, and liberates his spirit. Given such a character, and the art of a great actor becomes as light to beauty, revealing all its glory. *Virginius,* therefore, was, for McCullough, the best of all characters, but such ideals he found, in a greater or less

degree, in *Damon, Spartacus, Othello,* and *King Lear,* and in portions of *Richelieu* and *Coriolanus.* The test which an actor endures who can play *Damon* greatly is the test of being placed in situations which are instinct with elemental emotions. He must possess weight of character, intrinsic nobleness, and natural dignity,—constituents of splendid individuality which art does not and cannot supply. *Damon* is a type of strong and tender manliness. His virtue is inherent. He is concerned with *being,* not with seeming. It costs him no effort to be good,—he is good by nature. Being himself a stately and splendid man, he respects the stateliness and splendor of manhood in others, fervently feels its right to freedom, and scorns with all his soul the servility and evil that are mingled in the common web of life. He is passionately tender in his home affections, but he holds the welfare of his country to be more precious than his personal ties, and he loves honor more than life. That is a great ideal of character and, though exceptional, it is authentic. The dramatist has delineated *Damon* with vivid precision, and has placed him in a clear, white light. The vehemence of intense passion, controlled by proud intellect and guided by a fine moral sense, is the spirit of the subsequent action, through a sequence of simple events. *Damon,* condemned to death for attempting to kill the tyrant *Dionysius,* is allowed a respite of six hours in which to make a farewell visit to his wife and child. *Pythias,* his friend, is accepted as

a hostage, the surety for his return. Three fine scenes ensue. In the first the husband and father parts from his wife and child. In the second, the friend is overwhelmed by horror and goaded to a terrific delirium of rage by the well-meant but calamitous treachery of an affectionate servant, who has killed his horse to prevent his return,—a superserviceable act intended to save the life of *Damon* by sacrificing at once his honor and his hostage. In the third, at the supreme moment of agony, by almost preternatural exertions, the hero who has pledged his word reaches the scaffold—on which *Pythias* is about to be slain in his stead—and so keeps his promise, preserves his friend, and fulfils the suggested ideal of consummate heroism. There is in Shakespeare's *Brutus,* for example,—the matrix type of all the self-sacrificing heroes whom art has rescued from antiquity,—a broader, more philosophical, and more finely-touched poetical nature than appears in the drawing of Banim's *Damon,* but the humanity is the same in both. It has become customary, among injudicious or ignorant writers, to ridicule "Damon and Pythias," much as "Virginius" and "Richelieu" are ridiculed—a practice as foolish as it is unjust. The play is not admired for its defects either of mechanism or style, but for its many and indisputable merits, its ennobling influence, and its elementally stirring dramatic effects. The posture of circumstances and the ideal of conduct revealed in it, in their essential aspects,

are as possible to-day as they ever were. There can be no nobler ideal, and the actor who fills it, as McCullough did, attains an heroic eminence. He looked the part to perfection. There was, in his performance of *Damon,* the natural assumption, evenly sustained, of an ideal of character, and the action was brilliant with emotion: it seemed not acting but living. Any actor who is possessed of a resonant voice and a broad style can produce, as Forrest did, a tremendous physical effect in the retributive killing of the criminally officious servant, but it requires a fine temperament and fine art to make an auditor sympathetically appreciative of the noble rage which exalts an act of frenzy into an act of justice. That was the crowning excellence of McCullough's embodiment of *Damon.* He was not only adequate in dignity, feeling, and symmetry of execution; not only tender to the utmost limit of pathos, in the parting scene, and terrible and grievous in the deliriums both of horror and joy; not only fortunate in vocal felicity,—his tones being now martially sonorous and now mournfully tender,—but he illumined the whole performance with the grandeur of authentic heroism.

"THE GLADIATOR."

"The Gladiator," by Robert Montgomery Bird, a play which took a prize offered by Edwin Forrest, contains the character of *Spartacus,* of which Forrest was the first representative (1831) and in which he was

succeeded by McCullough. *Spartacus* especially exacts physical force and display. McCullough was not as stalwart as his eminent predecessor and exemplar in the part, and neither as animal in his wrath nor as terrific in suggestiveness of the potentiality of fatal violence. He did not, as Forrest had done, fill the inflated soliloquies of the *Gladiator* with the deep, reverberant organ music of a voice at once thunderous and melodious. He could not equal the savage cry with which Forrest made frightful the threat to "make Rome howl." In all respects, nevertheless, he gave a powerful performance and he made it splendidly effective. The blemishes of it were occasional inflexibility of facial expression and occasional inadequacy or repression of feeling,—as though the actor, while possessing the part, could not make it seem to have entirely possessed himself. The merits were many,—among them being splendid poise and demeanor; fine intelligence, gentleness of spirit, beneath a rugged exterior; innate refinement; the grand repose of essential manliness, and absolute simplicity of artistic method. *Spartacus,* the last part in which he ever appeared, was the part in which, as an established star, he first came before a metropolitan audience; and it is remembered that, although he came at a time when recollection of Forrest as the *Gladiator* was still vivid in the public mind, he achieved instant success. His personation of *Spartacus* was sustained at fully the height of

Brutus, and that is more than Forrest did with the character. It is only just to add that, while McCullough's ideal of *Spartacus* was finer, Forrest's performance was more truthful to the standard of reality.

"RICHELIEU."

It was not until McCullough had passed the meridian of his career that his embodiment of *Richelieu,*—another part in which he followed and emulated Forrest,—became worthy of a high rank among his personations. It was, from the first, a good performance, but, in his earlier time, it lacked poetic spirit. He had comprehended the superficial traits of the character but not its depths, and his performance, while marked by a fine artistic method, was deficient in the feeling and the romantic charm which elicit sympathy. His appearance was picturesque and impressive. His delivery was correct, sonorous, and clear. His demeanor and gesture evinced a mechanism carefully considered and thoroughly planned. His elocution, in delivery of salient speeches, was perfect. His expression of the *Cardinal's* bantering humor was admirable. The telling lines which so effectively advert to the art of justice, the invincible power of the pen, the absolute and unavoidable decree of destiny, and the impossibility of failure to the mind that believes in itself were spoken by him with splendid force, and his use and utterance of *Richelieu's* threat of excommunication, to *Barradas,* were marked by

massive solemnity of bearing and passionate intensity of purpose. It was perceptible, however,—and in conversation with me, long afterward, he admitted the fact,—that he was "playing for points." Later he came to feel and know that *Richelieu,* as drawn in Bulwer's play, is a character that combines some of the loveliest as well as the strongest attributes of human nature, and his personation underwent a radical change. The "points" were made as well as ever, but the man, as a human being, not a stage entity, was consistently embodied,—an incarnation of virtuous power employed in the protection of innocent weakness, and an image, also, of mournfully beautiful spiritual isolation, at the summit of worldly power,—an old man, infirm, lonely, oppressed by care, beset by perils, piteous by reason of his melancholy memories of vanished youth and love, and saddened to the heart's core by the sadness of that success which leaves an intellectual man *alone* in his eminence of power. The human qualities of the poet's *Cardinal* (a personage portrayed without particular regard to historic truth) appealed to McCullough's nature, the moment he looked at the part with his own eyes, and ceased to view it as a Forrestian inheritance. Neither of those actors, in playing *Richelieu,* manifested a grasp of it by the imagination. The superlatively great representative of the *Cardinal,* on any Stage, was Edwin Booth.

"OTHELLO."

The acting of McCullough, in all the parts that he played, was marked by profound sincerity. His nature was splendidly self-poised and that equilibrium enabled him, through years of patient labor, to hold a steadfast course and to surmount all the obstacles which oppose and ignore all the detraction which assails a man who is striving to achieve noble results in art. It also sustained him in the great Shakespearean characters which he essayed to personate, in each of which he was a remarkable, and in some of which a wonderful, figure. Analysis of several of his Shakespearean performances can be found in my "Shakespeare on the Stage" (1911). The intrinsic worth of them, meanwhile, is signified here by a few words about his personation of *Othello.* Simplicity, urged almost to the extreme of barrenness, would not be out of place in that part, and McCullough, in his treatment of it, evinced practical appreciation of that truth. His ideal of *Othello* combined manly tenderness, inherent magnanimity, and trusting devotion, with a volcanic ground-swell of passion, a clear and early denotement of latent capability of delirium. His method had the calm movement of a summer cloud, in every act and word by which this was shown. For intensity and for immediate, adequate, large, overwhelming response of action to emotion, that performance has not been surpassed. There were points

in it, though, at which the massive serenity of the actor's temperament momentarily deadened the glow of feeling and depressed him to undue calmness; he sometimes recovered too suddenly and fully from a tempest of emotion,—as at the agonizing appeal to *Iago,* "Give me a living reason she's disloyal," and he was not sufficiently delirious in the speech about the sibyl and the handkerchief. On the other hand, once yielded to the spell of desecrated feeling, his mood and his expression of it were immeasurably pathetic and noble. Those two great ebullitions of despair, "Oh, now forever" and "Had it pleased heaven," could not be spoken in a manner more absolutely heart-broken or more beautifully simple than the manner that was used by him. In his obvious though silent suffering at the disgrace and dismissal of *Cassio;* in the dazed, forlorn agony that blended with active passion throughout the scene of *Iago's* wicked conquest of *Othello's* credulity; in the occasional quick relapses into blind and sweet fidelity to the old belief in *Desdemona;* in the unquenchable tenderness for her, through the delirium and the sacrifice; and in the tone of soft, romantic affection,—always spiritualized, never sensual, —that his deep, loving sincerity diffused throughout the performance, was shown the grand unity of the embodiment, a unity based on the simple passion of love. To hear him say the one supreme line to *Iago,* "I am bound to thee forever," was to know that he understood and felt the meaning of the character to its

minutest fibre and its profoundest depth. There were touches of fresh and aptly illustrative business in the encounter of *Othello* and *Iago,* in the great scene of the Third Act. The gasping struggles of *Iago* heightened the effect of *Othello's* fury, and the quickly suppressed impulse and cry of rage with which he finally bounded away caused a thrilling effect of nature. In the last scene McCullough rounded his performance by a solemn act of sacrifice. There was nothing animal, nothing barbaric, in the killing of *Desdemona.* It was done in a sacrificial spirit and as an act of justice, and the atmosphere surrounding the deed was not that of horror but of awe.

XXIII.

JOHN SLEEPER CLARKE.

1833—1899.

THE eminent American comedian John Sleeper Clarke died suddenly, in London,—where he had long resided,—on September 25, 1899, in his sixty-seventh year. He was a native of Baltimore, Maryland, born in 1833. In early youth he studied law, under the tuition of Elisha R. Sprague, of the Baltimore Bar, but he abandoned that pursuit and adopted the Stage, making his first appearance, at the Howard Athenæum, Boston, in 1851, as *Frank Hardy,* in "Paul Pry." He had previously obtained a little experience of acting, as a member of the Baltimore Thespian Club, a society in which Edwin Booth,—who was born in the same year,—was a leading spirit. On August 28, 1852, Clarke appeared at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, playing *Soto,* in Cibber's comedy of "She Would and She Would Not," and from that time he continued, for many years, a career of successful activity in the dramatic profession. His rise was rapid. In 1854 he was the leading comedian at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore; in August, 1855, he assumed the same posi-

tion at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia; in June, 1858, he became one of the lessees and managers of that theatre, in association with William Wheatley; and soon thereafter he became a star actor in comedy,—taking a rank which for many years he held with dignity and honor, and with constantly increasing reputation.

Clarke's first appearance in New York was made at the Metropolitan Theatre,—afterward called the Winter Garden,—on May 15, 1855, as *Dickory,* in "The Spectre Bridegroom," but it was not until he came again, in 1861-'62, to the same theatre that he made a conspicuous mark. He then acted *Major De Boots, Toodle,* and *Farmer Ashfield,* and such a conservative judge as the late George William Curtis then hailed him as "by far the finest artist that has been seen upon these boards since Rachel." (The great French actress had played her last American engagement at the Metropolitan, 1855.) In 1863 Clarke, who, in the meantime,—April 28, 1859,—had married Edwin Booth's eldest sister, Asia Booth, became associated with Edwin Booth in the management of the Winter Garden, and about the same time he leased the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and bought an interest in the Boston Theatre (1866). The Winter Garden was burnt down in 1867, but Clarke had previously sold his share in it to Edwin Booth. In 1867 he went to London, appearing at the St. James's Theatre, as

Major De Boots, and he there gained immediate success and a brilliant reputation. He then established his home in England. In 1870 he appeared in New York, at Booth's Theatre, and thereafter made an American tour, but in the next year he returned to London. At various times, in that city, he figured as a manager. He opened the Charing Cross Theatre, in 1872; leased the Haymarket Theatre, in 1877-'78, and long conducted the Strand Theatre.

At the beginning of his career Clarke wished to play tragedy, but he soon discovered his true bent, and throughout life he was faithful to the Comic Muse, and by her he was abundantly rewarded. His characteristic impersonations were those of *Major De Boots, Salem Scudder, Jack Gosling,* in "Fox and Goose"; *Paul Pry, Babington Jones,* in "Among the Breakers"; *Dr. Pangloss, Mr. Toodle, Dr. Ollapod, Acres, Phineas Pettiephogge,* in "The Thumbscrew," and *Robert Tyke,* in "The School of Reform." He also acted one of the *Dromios,* in "The Comedy of Errors." As a manager he produced the plays, among others, of "Anne Boleyn," by Tom Taylor; "Married in Haste" and "Conscience Money," by Henry J. Byron; "Ellen," by W. G. Wills, and "Dan'l Druce" and "Engaged," by W. S. Gilbert. His name was memorably associated with the character of *Major Wellington De Boots,*—in "Everybody's Friend," afterward renamed "A Widow Hunt," —a part that he acted upward of two hundred and

fifty times in New York and more than a thousand times in America before he presented it in England.

The acting of Clarke was sincere; it was urged by a clear, firm, propulsive purpose; it was original in character; it was compact and pointed in style. The power that he exercised, to please and captivate, to stimulate laughter and inspire affectionate liking, should, doubtless, be ascribed to temperament. He was a humorist. Life struck his mind at the comic angle, and his constitutional methods of response to its influence were either drolly playful or downright comic. Yet, as an artist, he left nothing to chance, and the first implications of his acting were clear perception and strong thought. There was no heedless, accidental quality in his art,—neither hesitation, uncertainty, excess, or error. The puissant charm of his acting sprang from the perfect control that he exercised over his powers,—his complete understanding of himself, his minute and thorough perception of cause and effect in stage art, and his consummate skill in deducing the one from the other. Depth and variety of pathos and spirituality were not implied by his personations,—although, indeed, there was pathos in his acting of *Tyke*,—but those personations were richly fraught with original character, drollery, intense earnestness, clear meaning distinctly revealed and unerringly projected, and the unity of texture and symmetry of form that should characterize a dramatic ideal thoroughly fashioned and adequately

expressed. When Clarke came on the stage in an assumed character he filled it to the utmost; and he never lapsed out of it. Though his ways were, in almost all things, grotesque, each of his portrayals was distinctly individual: *De Boots, Toodle, Pangloss, Waddilove, Acres, Bob Tyke,* and *Redmond Tape* were all different persons. He made *De Boots, Toodle,* and other such eccentric characters, natural and probable human beings, rather than figments of a grotesque fancy. As represented by him, those parts suggested a background of experience and the verisimilitude of daily life. He was happy in the introduction of delicate points of 'business' which served to augment and more clearly define the texture of the part, without, however, in any way changing it. He acted with the ease of a second nature, that makes the observer oblivious of the skill which alone could produce such effects of illusion. Seldom has anything as ludicrous been heard on the stage as the tone in which Clarke, as *De Boots,* mentioned the approach of "that man who has such a lively interest in my nose," or the one of self-opinionated complacency with which, as *Toodle,* the comedian said, "He went to his grave, and died there." In lacework the most delicate threads count, and Clarke's mechanism was always lace.

From an Old Photograph. In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.

JOHN S. CLARKE.

XXIV.

TOMMASO SALVINI.

1833—19—.

Tommaso Salvini, long illustrious in his native Italy and famous in many countries, was born at Milan, in 1833. His parents were actors. He attended school in Florence, but only for a short time. His inclination for the Stage was early manifested, and at the age of fifteen his father placed him, as a pupil, under the care of the proficient Modena, a veteran whose fortune it was to train several youthful aspirants who afterward rivalled or surpassed his own eminence. The young Salvini made rapid progress and in various public representations acquitted himself with credit. Both his mother and father died while he was yet in boyhood, and he had the consequent experience of considerable hardship. At first he joined a strolling company, managed by L. Domeniconi, of which Ristori, then young, was a member. In 1849 he was in Rome, where he served as a common soldier, in the attempted defence of that city against the French invasion,—winning from General Avezzana, commandant of the republican forces then assembled, a medal and a certificate of special

honor for his determined courage and zeal. After Rome had been captured he became a wanderer and dwelt in various cities of Italy, devoting himself to study of the classic drama. On his return to the Stage, which presently was effected, he made a professional tour, acting *King Saul,* in Alfieri's tragedy, and *King Œdipus.* He then visited Paris, appearing there in Voltaire's "Zaïre," and also as *Orestes, King Saul,* and *Othello,* and gaining distinguished critical recognition as well as popular homage. In the meanwhile the drama of "Morte Civile" had been written for him, by Giacometti, and, returning to Italy, he achieved extraordinary success, as *Corrado,*—always one of his greatest impersonations. In 1865 he took a conspicuous part in the performances and proceedings commemorative of Dante, which then occurred, at Florence. He was at that time in the prime of life, and then and for many years thereafter his professional activity was incessant; he travelled far and wide, he acted many parts, and he steadily grew in professional renown. About 1868-'69 he made a prosperous tour of Spain and Portugal, and in 1871 he carried the banner of artistic conquest into South America.

Salvini's first visit to the United States was made in 1873. He had been engaged, in the previous year, by that judicious yet adventurous manager Jacob Grau (who brought Ristori to America in 1866), but, Jacob Grau becoming disabled by an illness that eventually

proved fatal, the management of the Salvini tour of the United States devolved on his nephew, Maurice Grau,—afterward distinguished as a manager of both Opera and Drama, and now also deceased. Salvini made his first appearance in New York, on September 16, 1873, at the Academy of Music, as *Othello,*—giving a performance which deeply affected a vast and brilliant audience: that performance, afterward many times repeated, in New York and in many other American cities, was generally accepted and extolled as a perfect interpretation of the poet's *Othello,*—the fact, meantime, being that, while it was potent as acting, it was radically false to Shakespeare, in ideal. Salvini, however, became an object of enthusiastic admiration throughout the United States, and that distinction he long maintained. His later professional visits to America were invariably attended by success and honor. He acted in New York with especial brilliancy in the seasons of 1880-'81, 1882-'83, and 1885-'86, when he was seen by a multitude of persons, at Booth's Theatre, the Academy of Music, the Fifth Avenue Theatre, and the Metropolitan Opera House. His repertory, while acting in America, comprised *Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Coriolanus, King Hamlet's Ghost, King Œdipus, King Saul, Ingomar, Niger,* in "The Gladiator"; *Corrado,* in "Morte Civile"; *Sullivan,* the French and also the Italian name of the actor, in "David Garrick"; *Paolo,* in the tragedy of "Francesca

da Rimini"; and *Maxime Odiot,* in "The Romance of a Poor Young Man." His first performance, in America, of *Hamlet* was given at the Academy of Music, New York, October 2, 1873, but neither then nor at any other time did he identify himself with that character or succeed in presenting it as drawn by Shakespeare. His first American essay as *Macbeth* occurred on February 11, 1881, at Booth's Theatre. His first presentment of the Italian ideal of *King Lear* was made on February 21, 1883, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. On April 16, 1883, at Booth's Theatre, he repeated his potent and pathetic performance of *Corrado,* in "Morte Civile," in association with Clara Morris, who,—acting in English,—appeared as *Corrado's* daughter, *Rosalie.* His assumption of *Coriolanus* was made known here, at the Metropolitan Opera House, on November 11, 1885. In the spring of 1886 Salvini and Edwin Booth acted together, at the Academy of Music,—the former as *Othello,* the latter as *Iago.* Mrs. D. P. Bowers played *Emilia,* and Miss Marie Wainwright played *Desdemona.* That performance,—a singular example of the admixture of dissonant languages and strongly contrasted professional methods,—occurred on April 26; and on April 30 "Hamlet" was presented, Edwin Booth acting the *Prince* and Salvini appearing as the *Ghost.* The Italian actor's selection of the *Ghost* was a disappointment to Booth, who considered *King Claudius* the better part,

and thought Salvini did himself an injustice by not playing it. That performance was repeated, May 3, in Philadelphia.

It was not, however, in the creations of Shakespeare, —a poet practically unknown in Italian literature,— that Salvini gained his actual, as distinguished from his fictitious, sovereignty as an actor. His altogether great impersonations were those of characters indigenous to his native language. His greatest performance was that of Alfieri's *Saul,* and, in due succession to that, a judicious estimate of his achievement would place *Niger,* in "The Gladiator"; *Samson, Corrado,* and *Ingomar.* He was fine in romantic drama, but he was best in characters incorporative of tragical passion and pathos. His appeal was made chiefly to the feelings; not so much to the imagination or the intellect; and no auditor of his acting could resist that appeal. The uncommon size of the man, his magnetism, the vigor of his action, the solidity of his repose, the triphammer force of his delivery, and his sonorous speech,—at imperial moments varied with a crashing outburst, like the roll of thunder,—could affect even nerves of steel. His most extraordinary natural endowment was his voice. In vocal force and variety combined he has not been surpassed on our Stage, except by Edwin Forrest and Gustavus V. Brooke. His presence was majestic. His countenance, dull in repose, could be wonderfully expressive when he was aroused.

His gestures were broad and free. His knowledge of technical dramatic mechanism was complete, and his use of it was generally judicious and often superb. No one who saw could ever forget the grandeur, the pathos, the power, the splendid dramatic expression with which (for example of professional facility) he illumined those agonizing, terrible situations in Saumet's tragedy of "The Gladiator" wherein *Niger,* condemned to be the executioner of his daughter, at first, in the arena, pleads for her life, and then, in the dungeon, kills her to save her from pollution.

His most conspicuous defect was animalism,—an attribute that made his performance of *Hamlet* a desecration. The *Prince of Denmark* is the sombre, grief-stricken, mournful, wavering hero of poetic tragedy,—a being of spiritualized intellect, feminine weakness, over-imaginative reason, lovable temperament, tear-freighted humor, princely grace of condition, brooding melancholy, the philosophic mind, and the deep heart. He sees so widely and understands so dubiously the nature of things in the universe that his sense of moral responsibility is overwhelmed and his power of action arrested. He wanders darkly in the borderland betwixt reason and madness,—haunted now by sweet strains and majestic images of heaven, now by vague, terrific shapes of hell; and so, piteous and forlorn, he drifts upon a sea of misery, to vanish in the merciful oblivion of death. The spectacle presented by Salvini

as *Hamlet* was preposterous. His *Prince* had the aspect and apparent muscularity of a bull. The dominant attribute of him was executive force. Such a man would have tossed *Uncle Claudius* into the sea; slain *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern* by the simple method of smashing their heads together; placed *Mother Gertrude* in a nunnery; married *Ophelia* offhand; spanked *Brother Laertes,* and kicked *Fortinbras* down the castle stairway—and would have attended to all that business before breakfast. It was impossible that a man of the mental and physical nature disclosed by Salvini's embodiment of the *Dane* could suffer the misery that is in Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* On the other hand, as *King Saul* the Italian actor towered to greatness. In that character, drawn by Alfieri in close accordance with the severe simplicity of the Bible narrative, are depicted the conditions of stately and robust personality, an arrogant, fiery spirit, a kind heart, and a regally poised nature. That nature has been undermined by sin and the consciousness of sin, and then crazed by contact with the spiritual world and by a nameless dread of the impending anger of offended God. It would be difficult to conceive a more distracting and piteous state. Awe and terror surround that august sufferer and make him holy and dreadful. In his person and his condition he combines elements that irresistibly impress and thrill. He is of superb physical stature, and he possesses a beauty of face which

grief has ravaged but not destroyed. He is a valiant warrior, and danger seems to radiate from his presence. He is a magnanimous king and a loving father, and he softens by generosity and wins by gentleness. He is at times a maniac, haunted by spectres, scourged with a whip of scorpions, so that his red-eyed fury makes all space a hell and shatters silence with the shrieks of the damned. He is a human soul, burdened with the frightful consciousness of divine wrath and poised in torment on the marge, precipitous and awful, of the storm-beaten ocean of eternity. His human weakness is frighted by ghastly visions and indefinite horrors, his vain struggle against which only makes his forlorn condition more piteous and drear. The gleams of calm that fall upon his tortured spirit only light an abyss of misery—a vault of darkness peopled by demons. He is already cut off from the living by the doom of inevitable fate. His coming seems attended by monstrous shapes. His voice is a cry of anguish or a wail of desolation: his existence is a tempest. There can be no relief for him except in death, and the death that ends him comes like the blessing of tears to the scorched eyelids of consuming misery. That is the Saul of the Bible and of Alfieri's tragedy, and Salvini's embodiment of it would have made him famous, had he done nothing else.

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of the Author.*

TOMMASO SALVINI.

XXV.

JOHN T. RAYMOND.

1836—1887.

John T. Raymond, whose true name was John O'Brien, was born in Buffalo, New York, on August 5, 1836, and he died, at Evansville, Indiana, on April 10, 1887. He received a common school education and some training in mercantile pursuits, but at the age of seventeen he ran away from home, to go on the stage. "I knew no more about the Theatre then," he once said to me, "than I did about the moon." His first appearance was made on June 27, 1853, at a theatre in Rochester, New York, under the management of Messrs. Carr and Henry Warren, as *Lopez,* in "The Honeymoon." He was almost paralyzed by stage fright on that occasion, and as the condition of *Lopez* is mostly that of comic vacuity he made an accidental hit in the part, but on the following night, when he undertook to play one of the soldiers in "Macbeth," his inexperience was painfully revealed. From Rochester he went to Philadelphia, where he appeared, September 20, 1854, as *Timothy Quaint,* in "The Soldier's Daughter." Later he was engaged by John E.

Owens, at the Charles Street Theatre, Baltimore, and for several immediately subsequent seasons he was employed on the circuit of Southern theatres, acting in Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans.

Raymond first became known in New York in 1861, when he appeared at Laura Keene's Theatre, succeeding Joseph Jefferson in low comedy parts, and at that time he acted *Asa Trenchard,* in "Our American Cousin." On July 1, 1867, he appeared in London, at the Haymarket Theatre, acting *Trenchard* in association with Edward A. Sothern, and subsequently, in company with Sothern, he acted in Paris and likewise made a tour of British provincial cities. In the autumn of 1868 he reappeared in New York, playing *Toby Twinkle,* in "All That Glitters Is Not Gold." Later he went to San Francisco, where, on January 18, 1869, he made his first appearance at the California Theatre, acting *Graves,* in Bulwer's fine comedy of "Money." There he remained for several seasons, steadily advancing in public favor, but, being ambitious to extend the field of his activity, he presently returned to the Eastern seaboard, and after various efforts made a decisive hit in the character of *Colonel Mulberry Sellers,* in a play based on the story of "The Gilded Age," by "Mark Twain." That piece was brought out at the Park Theatre, on September 16, 1874. (It had previously been acted in San Francisco.) As *Colonel Sellers* Raymond gained popularity throughout the

United States and Canada, and he acted the part, but not with success, in London, in 1880. On the American Stage his personation of *Sellers* prospered abundantly for several years, but after a time it became hackneyed, and Raymond was constrained to seek a new character, and on August 18, 1879, he came forward, at Wallack's Theatre, as *Ichabod Crane,* giving one of the most quaint, humorous, touching impersonations that have graced the Stage in our time. Raymond subsequently travelled every season, gaining more or less success, throughout the country, varying his performances of *Colonel Sellers* by representations of *Herr Weigel,* in "My Son"; a politician in David Demorest Lloyd's "For Congress"; *Montague Joliffe,* in Pinero's comedy of "In Chancery," and *Pembroke,* an insurance agent, in "Risks," by Bartley Campbell. In 1886 he played in many cities as *Æneas Posket,* in Pinero's excellent farcical play of "The Magistrate."

Raymond's professional career extended over a period of thirty-two years, in the course of which he acted all the parts that usually fall to the lot of a low comedian. He was seen as *Dickory,* in "The Spectre Bridegroom"; *Goldfinch,* in "The Road to Ruin"; *Acres, Dr. Ollapod, Dr. Pangloss, Tony Lumpkin, Roderigo, Mr. Lullaby, Mr. Pillicoddy, Salem Scudder, Asa Trenchard, Toby Twinkle, Mr. Toodle,* and many kindred characters. By nature and purpose he was a thoughtful comedian, one who desired to identify him-

self with important eccentric characters in rational drama, but his excessive animal spirits and a certain grotesque extravagance in his manner affected the public more directly and powerfully than anything that ever he did as a dramatic artist. "When I remain in the picture," Raymond said to me, "the public will not accept me, but the moment I get out on the frame, they seem to be delighted." For that reason he usually "got out on the frame." His humor was rich and jocund. He had an exceptional command over composure of countenance. He could deceive an observer by the sapient gravity of his visage, and he exerted that facial faculty with extraordinary comic effect. He was audacious in the perpetration of practical jokes. His mood was eager and sanguine, and it sometimes painted the future in rosy hues, but he was subject to melancholy, which he carefully concealed. He was impetuous in temper but affectionate in disposition, and his private life was marked by acts of kindness and generosity. I do not remember to have heard anybody speak ill of him except the late Samuel L. Clemens, "Mark Twain," —who, long after Raymond's death, published severe and, in my opinion, unwarranted disparagement of him. As an actor Raymond gave innocent pleasure to thousands of persons and lightened for many hearts the weary burden of care. His professional lineage is that of Foote, Finn, John Barnes, and E. A Sothern, though he lacked the artistic refinement and copious

versatility attributed to Foote, and certainly possessed by Finn, Barnes, and Sothern. Raymond was twice married, his first wife being Marie E. Gordon, a pleasing actress, known on the stage after 1864; now deceased. Their married life was unhappy and they were legally separated. His second wife, who survived him, was a daughter of the late Rose Eytinge. At the time of his second marriage he obtained legal authority for the change of his name from John O'Brien to John T. Raymond. His body was brought to New York, and buried in the Actors' Plot, in Evergreen Cemetery, Long Island. His grave is marked by a stone bearing the following inscription and epitaph, written by me:

This monument, the gift of many affectionate friends, is placed here in loving memory of John T. Raymond, comedian. He was born in Buffalo, New York, April 5, 1836. *He died in Evansville, Indiana, April* 10, 1887.

"Hinc apicem rapax
Fortuna cum stridore acuto
Sustulit, hic posuisse gaudet."

His restless spirit, while on earth he dwelt,
Wreathed with a smile whatever grief he felt,
And 'twas his lot, though crowned with public praise,
Ample and warm, to walk in troubled ways.
Glad was his voice, that all men loved to hear,
While few surmised the pang, the secret tear;
Yet did that thrill of pathos flush the grace
Of playful humor in his speaking face,

Inform his fancy and inspire his art
To cheer the senses and to touch the heart.
Jocund and droll, incessant, buoyant, quaint,
His vigor fired the forms his skill could paint,
Till, over-anxious lest effects were tame,
He left his picture, to adorn its frame.
A mind more serious never did engage
Through simulated mirth the comic Stage,
Nor strong ambition conquer and control
A sturdier will and more aspiring soul.
If haply, much constrained, his purpose bowed
To woo the fancy of the fickle crowd,
Yet did his judgment spurn the poor renown
Of shallow jester and of trivial clown.
A true comedian this, by fate designed
To picture manners and to cheer mankind.
So RAYMOND lived; and naught remains to tell,
Save that too soon the final curtain fell.
Peace to his dust, where Love and Honor weep,
In endless sorrow, o'er their comrade's sleep.

Raymond's most popular performance was that of *Colonel Sellers,* in "The Gilded Age"; his most artistic and important embodiment that of *Ichabod Crane,* in Rowe's "Wolfert's Roost."

RAYMOND'S ACTING.—"THE GILDED AGE" AND "WOLFERT'S ROOST."

The character of *Colonel Sellers* is presented by the dramatist in only a few of the aspects available for its exposition and is attached to the play by only a slender thread. Raymond, nevertheless, by means of thorough

personification, made the character so conspicuous that it dominated the whole action of the play. The common notion that words are indispensable to the expression of character is unfounded. Character shows itself in personality, which is the emanation of it, and which finds expression in countless ways with which words are not associated. Personality was the potent charm of Raymond's embodiment of *Colonel Sellers,*—a personality compounded of vigorous animal spirits, quaintness, rich humor, amiability, recklessness, a chronic propensity for sport, a sensitive temperament, and an ingenuous mind. The actor made the character lovable not less than amusing, by the spontaneous suggestion of innate goodness and by various scarcely definable sweetly winning traits and ways. His grave inquiry, as to the raw turnips, "Do you *like* the fruit?" was irresistibly droll. His buoyant, confident ejaculation,—closing each discourse on some visionary scheme of profit,—"There's *millions* in it!" (which Raymond's utterance made a byword throughout America) completely expressed the spirit of the sanguine speculator and was not less potently humorous because of a certain vague ruefulness in the tone of it. In acting *Colonel Sellers* Raymond did something that was new, did it in an individual way, was original without being bizarre, and, possessing the humor which is akin to pathos, he could cause the laugh that is close to the tear.

"The artist," says Longfellow, "shows his character

in the choice of his subject." In choosing from Washington Irving the subject of "Wolfert's Roost" George Fawcett Rowe evinced a characteristic sympathy with whatever is quaint, humorous, gentle, and romantic in literature and life. The field into which he thus penetrated has not, for this purpose, been much explored. "Rip Van Winkle"—remotely of Greek and later of German origin—was found in it, and one at least of the tales of "The Alhambra" has been turned into a play. There are other instances, but that rich realm of fiction has been neglected. Irving, though not the earliest of our important authors, can justly be called the father of American Literature. His hand laid the foundation of the graceful structure of letters that has slowly risen in the nation, and which continues to rise. The sneer of Rogers, that he was only "Addison and water," and the contemptuous estimate of Hazlitt, who called him "a mere filigree man," were long ago discomfited, and it is a pleasant spectacle that the Stage presents when it enriches itself, and fosters and benefits the public taste, at the same time that it pays a tribute to the memory of a famous American author. Irving, indeed, is not a dramatic writer. The charm of his stories resides in feeling, description, character, and style. They do not attempt action and they contain but little dialogue. Yet they are vital with the play of ingenious fancy, and they abound in suggestions of situation. The dramatist would do no good in merely

reproducing them. He must expand their hints, amplify their outlines of character, rearrange their incidents, and vitalize with action the structure of their plots. There is no better dramatic subject than that of "Rip Van Winkle," though a better play could be made out of it than Boucicault's careless rearrangement of the old piece, which only the genius of Jefferson kept alive. Rowe selected the narrower, humbler theme of "Wolfert's Roost," but he wrought with fine ability and conscientious skill and he made a pleasing domestic play.

Its story is coherent and sympathetic, and its five acts tell the story in action, without excess of words. Its characters are clearly discriminated, and each is harmonious with probability and with the historical period (about 1812) in which the scene is laid. Its movement is continuous, through a series of dramatic effects, to a striking climax and a happy culmination. Its plot,—expanded out of hints from "Wolfert's Roost," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and other writings of Irving,—if not new, is commended to favor by novelty of treatment. Its incidents are numerous and generally they are bright. Its method in displaying the central character, *Ichabod Crane,*—who is made a sort of agreeable *Paul Pry,* or a sprightly, energetic *Dominie Sampson,*—shows a delightfully nimble fancy and a hearty relish of quaint, droll humor. Its sentiment is tender, its spirit is pure, and over it all there is an atmosphere of romance, deftly commingled with

rustic color. Its scene is mostly out-of-doors, and in its use of night and day, foliage, moonlight, storm, flowers, sound, and silence it shows a deep sympathy with the charms and the mysteries of nature. Its dialogue,—almost entirely original with the dramatist, who took only a few sentences from Irving,—is unaffected, suitable to the subject and the several speakers, and at times piquant with a felicitous wit. "You never was a fader?" says old *Baltus,* to *Brom Van Brunt.* "No, and I never shall be," answers the baffled suitor of *Katrina,* "if I go on like this." "Beauty is but skin deep," says *Ichabod Crane.* "That's deep enough, isn't it?" is the responsive inquiry of *Katrina.*

Rowe's play is pure drama, not comedy. There is no attempt in it to paint manners or to enliven artificial talk with the sheen of equivoke. Customs, indeed, are suggested,—as when, in Act Third, the characters assemble in the "living-room" of the farm-house to frolic on All-Hallow E'en. The fragrance of old-time civilization in what was still Dutch New York is made to saturate the texture of the piece. But manifestly the work was made for its own sake,—for its story, character, and vehicular utility in acting,—and not for the illumination of its epoch: and it was made well. There are a few defects in it of forced incident and untrue character. The fibre of the piece is slender, and, by reason more of the subject of the drama than the author's treatment of it, the play lacks that vitality

which comes of everlasting applicability to common experience, that universality of interest which alone can give permanence to the creations of the human mind; but it is a charming play.

The First Act confronts *Dolph Haverstraw* and *Brom Van Brunt* as lovers of *Katrina Van Tassel. Dolph* is heir to the impoverished estate of "Wolfert's Roost"; *Brom* is a flourishing young butcher; *Katrina,* the blooming daughter of *Baltus Van Tassel,* is the belle of Sleepy Hollow. Those persons, together with *Dolph's* mother and sister, *Phœbe,* a mulatto servant, *Ichabod Crane,* the comic factotum of his neighborhood, and the "grimly ghost" of old *Wolfert Haverstraw,* are brought on in this act, and the story is opened by the despatch of *Dolph* to sea and the apparition of the Dutch spectre, seen by *Ichabod* and heard to command a search for his buried treasure. The rising of the *Ghost* from an old well ends the act, and makes a weirdly fantastic picture. Act Second shows *Katrina* grieving for the absent *Dolph,* whom she has petulantly rejected; *Ichabod,*—smitten by the heiress,—comically striving to learn the cause of her sadness; *Emma Haverstraw* enamored of *Ichabod;* and, finally, *Brom,* exultant in the news that his rival has been lost at sea. Acts Third and Fourth, beginning with the intimation that this bad news is not true, are devoted to rejoicings at *Van Tassel's* farm, and they involve *Dolph's* return, in disguise; *Emma's* betrothal to *Ichabod,* a

comical rendering of the episode of "The Headless Hessian,"—wherein *Ichabod* is hit by a hurtling pumpkin, and knocked into *Wolfert's* well,—and the burning of "Wolfert's Roost" and the attempted murder of *Dolph* by the jealous, infuriated *Brom.* The last act brings to light and to punishment the iniquity of *Van Brunt,* unites *Dolph* and *Katrina,* and produces *Ichabod,*—who has come up from the bottom of the well, bringing old *Wolfert's* buried treasure.

There is a shuddering passage in the last act, wherein the superstitious dread of *Brom,* who thinks himself haunted by a murdered man, is used with wild power to terminate the play. *Ichabod Crane* pervades the piece and lights it up with his humor and good nature. He is ungainly, agile, pertinacious, fantastic, absurd and ludicrous, and at the same time he is tender, delicate, and lovable,—a compound of awkward gallantry, quixotic philanthropy, scarecrow drollery, shrewdness, and homespun refinement. The part requires a keen sense of comic perplexity, a touch of wistful tenderness here and there,—his condition is so forlorn,—and, in one scene, an emotion closely akin to pathos. Raymond found it thoroughly congenial: he infused into it a sweet spirit, and he treated it with a delicacy of touch that surprised many persons who had known him only as the ebullient *Sellers.* To some extent, as before intimated, the part, like that of *Sellers,* is extraneous to the main action of the drama. It hovers

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of the late Douglas Taylor.*

JOHN T. RAYMOND
as
Ichabod Crane, in "Wolfert's Roost."

around the current of what is done and suffered, but is not interpenetrated with those experiences. Moreover, *Ichabod,* in the enforced transfer of his love, wrought by the coquettish *Katrina,* is cajoled, and that fact limits the scope of the character for serious acting. Raymond, all the same, embodied a winning personality and made it as gracious with inherent gentleness as it was droll with eccentric humor.

XXVI.

LAWRENCE BARRETT.

1838—1891.

THE death of Lawrence Barrett was the disappearance of one of the noblest figures of the modern Stage. During his whole career, in a public life of thirty-five years, he was steadily and continuously impelled by a pure and fine ambition, and the objects that he sought to accomplish were always the worthiest and the best. His devotion to the dramatic art was passionate, and in an equal degree he was devoted to a high ideal of personal conduct. Doctrines of expediency never influenced him and indeed were never considered by him. He had early fixed his eyes on the dramatic sceptre. He knew that it never could be gained except by the greatest and brightest of artistic achievements, and to them accordingly he consecrated his life. Many other dramatic efforts might be trivial: Lawrence Barrett so wrought that, at last, whenever and wherever he appeared, his were felt to be important, and the community was impressed by a sense of intellectual character, moral worth, and individual dignity. Most of the plays with which his name is identified are among

the greatest plays in our language, and the spirit in which he treated them was that of exalted scholarship, austere reverence, and perfect refinement. He was profoundly true to all that is noble and beautiful, and because he was true the world of art recognized him as the image of fidelity and gave to him the high tribute of unwavering homage. His mental vitality, which was very great, impressed even unsympathetic beholders with a sense of fiery thought struggling in its fetters of mortality and almost shattering and consuming the frail temple of its human life. His stately head, silvered with graying hair; his dark eyes, deeply sunken and glowing with intense light; his thin visage, pallid with study and pain; his form of grace and his voice of sonorous eloquence and solemn music (in compass, variety, and sweetness one of the few great voices of his dramatic generation), his tremendous earnestness, his superb bearing, and his invariable authority and distinction—all those attributes united to announce a ruler and leader in the realm of the intellect. The exceeding tumult of his spirit enhanced the effect of this mordant personality. The same sleepless energy that inspired Loyola and Lanfranc burned in the bosom of Barrett; and it was entirely in keeping with the drift of his character and the tenor of his life that the last subject which occupied his thoughts should have been the story of Becket, the great prelate—whom he intended to represent, and to whom in

mental qualities he was nearly allied. In losing Lawrence Barrett the American Stage lost the one American actor who served it with an apostle's zeal because he loved it with an apostle's love.

The essential attributes that Lawrence Barrett did not possess were enchantment for the multitude and adequate, philosophic patience for himself. He gained, indeed, a great amount of public favor, and,—with reference to an indisputable lack of universal sympathy and enthusiasm,—he was learning to regard as a natural consequence of his character that which formerly he had resented as the injustice of the world. Men and women of austere mind do not fascinate their fellow creatures. They impress by their strangeness. They awe by their majesty. They predominate by their power. But they do not involuntarily enrapture. Lawrence Barrett,—although full of kindness and gentleness, and, to those who knew him well, one of the most affectionate and lovable of men,—was essentially a person of austere intellect; and his experience was according to his nature. To some the world gives everything, without being asked to give at all. To others it gives only what it must, and that with an icy reluctance which often makes the gift a bitter one. Lawrence Barrett, who rose from an obscure and humble position,—without fortune, without friends, without favoring circumstances, without education, without help save that of his talents and his will,—was for a long time

met with indifference, or frigid obstruction, or impatient disparagement. He made his way by his strength: his progress involved continual effort: his course was attended by continual controversy: he gained nothing without battle. When at last it was conceded that he was a great actor, the concession was, in many places, grudgingly made. Even then detraction steadily followed him, and its voice,—though impotent and immeasurably trivial,—has not yet died away. There came a time when his worth was widely recognized, and from that moment onward he had much prosperity, and his customary mood grew calmer, sweeter, and brighter under its influence. But the habit of warfare had injected itself into his acting, and more or less it remained there to the last. The assertive quality, indeed, had begun to die away. The volume of needless emphasis was growing less and less. Few, if any, performances on the contemporary Stage are commensurate with the embodiments that he gave of *Harebell* and *Gringoire* in softness, simplicity, poetic charm, and the gentle tranquillity that is the repose of a self-centred soul. But his deep and burning desire to be understood, his anxiety lest his acting should not be appreciated, his inveterate purpose of conquest,—the overwhelming solicitude of ambition,—often led him to insist upon his points, to over-elaborate and enforce them, and in that way his art to some extent defeated itself by the excess of his eager zeal. The spirit of beauty, the spirit typi-

fied in Emerson's poem of "Forerunners" is an elusive spirit that many men feel and no man understands. This truth, undiscerned by him at first, had become the conviction of his riper years; and if his life had been prolonged the autumn of his professional career would have been gentle and full of tranquil loveliness.

The achievement of Lawrence Barrett as an actor was great, but his influence upon the Stage was greater than his achievement. Among the Shakespearean parts that he played were *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, Iago, Shylock, Leontes, Cassius, Wolsey, King Richard the Third, Romeo,* and *Benedick.* Outside of Shakespeare (to mention only a few of his impersonations) he acted *Richelieu, Evelyn, Aranza, Garrick, Claude Melnotte, Rienzi, Dan'l Druce, Lanciotto, Hernani, King Arthur,* and *Ganelon.* The parts in which he was superlatively fine, and in some respects incomparable, were *Cassius, Harebell, Yorick, Gringoire, King Arthur, Ganelon,* and *James the Fifth, King of the Commons.* In his time he had played scores of parts, ranging over a wide field of the Drama, but as the years passed and the liberty of choice came more and more within his reach he concentrated his powers upon a few works and upon a specific line of expression. The aspect of human nature and human experience that especially aroused his sympathy was the loneliness of beneficent intellectual grandeur, isolated by its supremacy and pathetic in its isolation. He loved

the character of *Richelieu,* and if he had acted *Becket,* in Tennyson's tragedy, he would have presented another and a different type of the same ideal—lonely, austere, passionate age, defiant of profane authority and protective of innocent weakness against wicked and cruel strength. His embodiment of *Cassius,* with all its intensity of repressed spleen and caustic malevolence, was softly touched and sweetly ennobled by the majesty of venerable loneliness,—the bleak light of pathetic sequestration from human ties, without the forfeiture of human love,—that is the natural adjunct of intellectual greatness. He loved also the character of *Harebell,* because in that he could express his devotion to the beautiful, the honest impulses of his affectionate heart, and his ideal of a friendship that is too large and simple even to dream that such a thing as guile can exist anywhere in the world. Toward the expression, under dramatic conditions, of natures such as those the development of his acting was steadily directed; and, even if he fell short, in any degree, of accomplishing all that he purposed, it is certain that his spirit and his conduct dignified the theatrical profession, strengthened the Stage in the esteem of good persons, and cheered the heart and fired the energy of every sincere artist who came within the reach of his example. For his own best personal success he required a part in which, after long repression, the torrent of passion can break loose in a tumult of frenzy and a wild strain of eloquent words.

The terrible exultation of *Cassius* after the fall of *Cæsar,* the ecstasy of *Lanciotto* when he first believes himself to be loved by *Francesca,* the delirium of *Yorick* when he can no longer restrain the doubts that madden his jealous and wounded soul, the rapture of *King James* over the vindication of his friend *Seyton,* whom his suspicions have wronged—those were among his distinctively great moments, and his image as he was in such moments is worthy to live among the storied traditions and the bright memories of the Stage.

Censure seems to be easy to most persons, and few men are rated at their full value while they are yet alive. Just as mountains seem more sublime in the vague and hazy distance, so a noble mind looms grandly through the dusk of death. So it is with him. Lawrence Barrett was a man of high principle and perfect integrity. He never spoke a false word or knowingly harmed a human being, in all his life. Although sometimes he seemed to be harsh and imperious, he was at heart kind and humble. Strife with the world, and in early times uncertainty as to his position, caused in him the assumption of a stern and frigid manner, but beneath that haughty reserve there was a great longing for human affection and a sincere humility of spirit. He never nurtured hostility, and a kindness he never forgot. His good deeds were as numerous as his days,—for no day rolled over his head without its act of benevolence in one direction or another. He was as impulsive as a

child. He had much of the woman in his nature, and therefore his views were impetuous, strong, and often strongly stated; but his sense of humor kept pace with his sensibility and so maintained the equilibrium of his mind. In temperament he was sad, pensive, introspective, almost gloomy; but he opposed to that tendency an incessant mental activity and the force of a tremendous will. In his lighter moods he was not only appreciative of mirth but was the cause of it. His humor was elemental, and whatever aspect of life he saw in a comic light he could set in that light before the eyes of others. He had been a studious reader for many years and his mind was stored with ample, exact, and diversified information. He had a scholar's knowledge of Roman history, and his familiar acquaintance with the character and career of the first Napoleon was extraordinary. In acting he was largely influenced by his studies of Edmund Kean and by his association with Charlotte Cushman. For a few years after 1864 his art was especially affected by that of Edwin Booth; but the style to which he finally gravitated was his own. He was not so much an impersonator as he was an interpreter of character, and the elocutionary part of acting was made more conspicuous and important by him than by any other tragedian since the days of Forrest and Brooke.

It was a beautiful life prematurely ended. It was a brave, strong spirit suddenly called out of the world.

To the dramatic profession the loss has never been repaired. In the condition of the contemporary Theatre there are not many hopeful signs. No doubt there will be bright days in the future, as there have been in the past. They go and they return. The Stage declines and the Stage advances. At present its estate is low. Few men like Lawrence Barrett remain for it to lose. Its main hope is in the abiding influence of such examples as he left. The old theatrical period is fast passing away. The new age rushes on the scene, with youthful vigor and impetuous tumult. But to some of us,—who perhaps have not long to stay, and to whom, whatever be their fortune, this tumult is unsympathetic and insignificant,—the way has grown darker and lonelier since we laid our garlands of farewell upon the coffin of Lawrence Barrett.

"FRANCESCA DA RIMINI."

The story of Francesca of Rimini is an episode of the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Those wars began in the twelfth century and continued till the end of the fifteenth century, when (1495) King Charles the Eighth of France invaded Italy. It is thought that the names Ghibelline and Guelph originated in a contest for the imperial crown, between Conrad of Hohenstaufen, Duke of Suabia and Lord of Wiblingen, and Henry, nephew of Welf, Duke of Bavaria, in 1138. From Wiblingen is derived Ghibelline; from Welf is

derived Guelph. The Popes took the side of the Guelphs, and so did many of the Italian cities. The Ghibellines at first prevailed, but eventually they were suppressed. Most of them were expelled from Italy in 1267, when the last of the Hohenstaufens was beheaded, by command of Charles of Anjou. The period of the story is the thirteenth century. Dante, by whom it was told, died at Ravenna in 1321. Rimini, in the old conflict, took the side of the Guelphs; Ravenna of the Ghibellines.

It is at the period when the *Guelphs* are predominant that the *Lord of Ravenna* deems it politic to seek a matrimonial alliance with the *House of Rimini,* so as to cement a peace and either secure the safety of his city or obtain an opportunity to overcome by treachery the city of his ancient foe. That marriage and its consequences make the theme of the tragedy of "Francesca da Rimini," by George Henry Boker (1823-1890), in which Lawrence Barrett acted. In that work the *Lord of Rimini, Malatesta,* has two sons,—*Lanciotto,* who is deformed, and *Paolo,* who is handsome. *Francesca,* daughter of *Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna,* is promised in marriage to *Lanciotto;* but *Paolo* is sent to escort her to Rimini. Her father, *Guido,* fearful that she may reject the alliance with the ugly *Lanciotto,* if she prematurely sees him, casually deceives her into the fatal belief that the proposed husband is he who comes as envoy—the handsome *Paolo,* whose beauty has

already attracted her, and who already loves her. The journey to Ravenna is made, and, at sight of *Lanciotto, Francesca* exhibits aversion, but, for the sake of Ravenna, she determines to keep her promise and marry him. At the altar he perceives her antipathy, and, upon announcement of a Ghibelline revolt, he dashes away, in a paroxysm of fury. *Paolo* and *Francesca* become guilty in their love, and their secret becomes known to a court Fool, *Pépé,* by name, who hates them. By him they are betrayed to *Lanciotto,*—who first murders the malignant *Jester* and then kills both wife and brother. His death follows, and that ends the tragedy.

Leigh Hunt's poem on the story of Francesca da Rimini bears the explanatory title of "The Story of Rimini; or, Fruits of a Parent's Falsehood," and is divided into four cantos, and that author provides a synopsis of the story.

"*Giovanni Malatesta, Lord of Rimini,*" he says, "has won, by his victories, the hand of the *Princess Francesca*, daughter of the reigning count of Ravenna, and is expected, with a gorgeous procession, to come and marry her. She has never yet seen him. The procession arrives. The Prince is discovered not to be *Giovanni Malatesta*, but his brother *Paolo*, whom he has sent as his proxy. *Francesca*, nevertheless, is persuaded to be affianced, and goes with him to Rimini."

Hunt then adopts the old-fashioned "argument" style, and proceeds thus:

"Effects of the sight and manners of her husband upon the bride. His character. *Paolo* discovers the part he had been led to play. Result of the discovery to him and *Francesca*. *Giovanni* is called away from Rimini by a revolt. The lovers are betrayed to the *Prince*. He slays them and sends their bodies in one hearse to Ravenna."

A fine passage in Hunt's poem is the description of the ride of *Francesca, Paolo,* and their train, through the forest of Ravenna to Rimini. It must have been remarked by all readers who ever gave attention to the subject that the story of *Giovanni, Paolo,* and *Francesca* resembles that of *King Arthur, Launcelot,* and *Guinevere.* In both cases the man who is sent to bring home the bride to the bridegroom, whom as yet she has never seen, becomes her lover and wins her love; but in the contrasted conduct of *King Arthur* and *Giovanni,* when betrayed, a wide divergence is shown between sublime endurance and desperate passion.

In each of the various versions of the story of Francesca use is made of the incident of the lovers at their book. They are reading about *Launcelot* and *Guinevere* when their lips meet in their first kiss. In Hunt's poem they are betrayed to *Giovanni* by a fop whose offensive attentions *Francesca* had repelled.

The first presentment of this play in New York was made at the old Broadway Theatre, September 26, 1855, under the management of E. A. Marshall. The chief characters in the piece were cast as follows:—

Lanciotto	E. L. Davenport
Pépé	Charles Fisher
Francesca	Mme. Ponisi
Paolo	James W. Lanergan
Malatesta	David Whiting
Rita	Josephine Manners

It was not entirely successful. Davenport's performance of *Lanciotto* was unimaginative, mechanical, and melodramatic, so that its artifice destroyed in it the effect of nature. That was one cause of the comparative failure of the tragedy. But another unpropitious force was inherent in the work—a redundance of monotonous versification. Boker's plays, like the dramatic fragments of Barry Cornwall and of Robert Browning, though fine in texture, noble in literary elements, and often eloquent and brilliant, show but little discrimination in the allotment of language to character. Their text is of a uniform fibre and color, and there is sometimes an excess of it. That is the case with "Francesca," and, being in so far undramatic that it made its appeal somewhat more to the ear than to the eye, the piece proved tedious. Perhaps, also, the popular taste of that period was not accordant with the spirit of a work so impassioned. "Francesca" soon went on the shelf; and there it remained till the autumn of 1882, when it was resuscitated by Lawrence Barrett. It will not be amiss for me to record the fact that he revived the play upon my urgent request

that he do so, and that I assisted him in making the stage version of it which he presented.

In reviving that tragedy Barrett was fortunate. He formed the true ideal of *Lanciotto*—a great soul prisoned in a misshapen body, intense in every feeling, tinctured with bitterness, isolated by deformity, tender and magnanimous but capable of frantic excess and terrible ferocity; a being marked out for wreck and ruin, and bearing within himself the elements of tragedy and desolation: and Barrett acted the part in one continuous, ever-ascending strain of tumultuous passion. By that means he made the piece a torrent of light,—luminous throughout its whole extent with his electric spirit. Before producing it we had cut out many passages of the original text; changed the arrangement of the scenes; broken it into six acts; assigned rightful places for the curtains; deepened the outlines, accelerated the movement, and sharpened each effect of climax.

In Act First *Paolo,* the handsome brother of the deformed *Lanciotto,* goes from Rimini to Ravenna, to obtain *Francesca* as his brother's bride. In Act Second *Paolo* and *Francesca* meet and love, and old *Guido da Polenta,* the father of the *Princess,* craftily deceives her as to what manner of man her proposed husband is. In Act Third *Lanciotto* and *Francesca* meet; and the lady, overcoming her repugnance, and in order to save her beloved Ravenna from the *Guelphs,* agrees to

become the hunchback's wife. In Act Fourth *Lanciotto* and *Francesca* are married; but the wife cannot hide her aversion, and the husband, after a turbulent outburst of jealousy, rushes away from the altar to suppress, in battle, a sudden revolt of the enemies of Rimini. In Act Fifth *Paolo* and *Francesca* are betrayed to *Lanciotto* by the Jester, *Pépé,* who falls beneath the dagger of the infuriated husband. At last *Lanciotto* begs his wife and brother to vindicate themselves, but, becoming assured of their treachery and sin, he kills them and afterward kills himself.

The telling points of the tragedy succeed each other in an ascending scale. At first the movement ambles and the tone is quiet. The first break is at the end of Act Third, when the *Princess* falsely but fervently declares that she loves the hunchback, and this deluded, trusting, miserable man rejoices in a delirium of exultation. The next is in the Cathedral Scene, when *Lanciotto* revolts from his deceitful wife and brother, and welcomes the chance of battle. The reckless passion there is overwhelming. The explosive, ghastly, and sinister climax of the betrayal, and then the killing of *Pépé,* are made weird by surroundings of loneliness and night. The scene of the final vengeance exceeds all previous effects in the play, in clamor of tribulation and in attributes of horror.

The elements of narrative and of oratory had not been, and they cannot be, quite suppressed. The omis-

sion of *Lanciotto* from the Second Act, although a necessity, operates as a defect. Such lightness as the play possesses is but the ghastly glow of a grim, bitter, sardonic humor,—expressed in the character and the jibes of *Pépé, the Jester,*—blent with a cumbersome playfulness of the two wily and treacherous chieftains, *Malatesta* and *Polenta.* Hence its color is so sombre as to be almost oppressive. The blackness, however, is somewhat relieved by the incidental pageantry and by the glowing brightness of the dramatic action. For a man in trouble and misery, *Lanciotto* has too much to say. That the drift and the catastrophe are obvious from the outset is not a blemish. The same is true of "Othello" and of "Macbeth." Surprises and mysteries are the attributes of novels, not of dramas. A more essential defect is the triteness of the story, when divested of its embellishments and considered with particular reference to the ignoble drift of its conclusion. A woman is beloved by two men, for one of whom she pretends love, while for the other she feels it. With one she weds; with the other she is false. She and her paramour are murdered by her husband, who then slays himself. That has occurred many times, and art has often embellished that posture of amatory affairs—moving through feverish suspense to a climax of murder and desolation. The thinker would like, occasionally, to come upon a different result. "Who loves, raves," Byron said, and

said the truth. There is something glorious in the wild, voluptuous frenzy of an *Antony;* but human nature can rise to a loftier height of greatness by its conquest of the passions than by its submission to them, and its inevitable sequent defeat and ruin. *King Arthur* is a more austerely majestic character than *Othello*—a far grander character than *Lanciotto.* No one can be accounted absolutely free or entirely great who lets the poise of his nature and the steadfast security of his soul depend upon the prosperity of his passions or the fidelity of human love. Perhaps dramatic effect could not be copiously extracted from a story treated in accordance with those views of life, but they may solace the reader who happens to be weary of the everlasting theme of carnal emotion.

A great beauty in Barrett's performance of *Lanciotto* was the exquisite proportion of the work—its moderation, at the outset, and then its gradual, balanced, natural growth. The character, though sombre with wretchedness, and moody and miserable with bitter self-communing and the unsatisfied longing of a passionate, affectionate nature, was never allowed to become flaccid or supine. Alertness of the brain sustained it, at every point, in brilliant vigor, and it rose in power and expanded in terrible beauty accordingly as it was wrought upon by the pressure of circumstances and the conflict of passions. Therein was shown the high quality of repose at extreme tension which is so noble

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

LAWRENCE BARRETT
as
Lanciotto, in "Francesca da Rimini."

and satisfying an attribute of the dramatic art. Another great beauty in Barrett's performance was the actor's consistent preservation of that tone of vague, wistful mournfulness,—not weak, not forlorn, but reticent, profound, and pathetic,—which naturally appertains to a human life that has been cursed with deformity from its birth, and which cannot, as human creatures mostly do, adjust its relations with other persons thoughtlessly and with gleeful carelessness.

Barrett's delivery of one line—in which all the pent-up misery is crystallized into words of simple, burning eloquence—I have long remembered and shall never forget. When *Paolo* has entreated the moody *Lanciotto* to be hopeful, and to "look up," the answer is a quick, involuntary, lamentable, wailing cry of passionate despair: "I cannot, brother:—God has bowed me down." Moments like that, in which there is subtlety as well as power, and which discover a deep knowledge of the human heart, impress the listener as more affecting in themselves, and as nobler achievements for the actor, than those frenzied, tumultuous outbursts—the one of frantic joy and the other of frantic ferocity—with which, ending the Third and Fourth Acts, Barrett agitated the feelings of his audience with a force like that of the whirlwind. Yet those paroxysms of tragic power were splendid. It was, doubtless, the sense of those opportunities, existent in the tragedy, masked behind an intense, fiery, and

indomitable intellectual concentration, which disposed Barrett toward the character of *Lanciotto.* The part fitted him wonderfully well, and he gained in it one of the greatest successes of his career. The quality he had reason to avoid was *insistence.* In acting, as in every other form of art, effects should be left to take care of themselves. The last and crowning glory is the dream-like haze of illusion.

There are fourteen characters in the piece, aside from the chief one, but only three of them are conspicuous, —*Pépé, Francesca,* and *Paolo.* The character of *Pépé* is drawn with vigor, imagination, and precision. In him deformity is of the mind,—wherein it has been generated by long-continued, implacable, and excruciating cruelty and injustice. "This should have been a noble creature," as is said of *Manfred,* but affliction and torture have perverted him into a sardonic, exultant scoffer at all forms of misery, his own included. He is a shining presence in the tragedy. He shines with the lustre of the reptile. He brings down the avalanche of ruin, and he is buried beneath it. He commingles tireless, nervous buoyancy and a sinister, ominous, dreadful jocularity with biting taunts, extravagant levity, and wild tirades of passion.

"THE KING'S PLEASURE."

The drama called "The King's Pleasure," a fanciful, delicate, pathetic play, gave to Barrett another golden

opportunity. That piece, a work of art which, with a few words, a few deft touches, through the excellent medium of suggestion, reveals a world of feeling, is an adaptation, by Alfred Thompson, from the French play of "Gringoire," by Théodore de Banville. At the beginning of it, *King Louis the Eleventh* (1469) is feasting in the house of *Simon Fourniez,* a rich burgher of Tours. That fortunate citizen has done a service to the *King,* who is therefore his friend and the godfather to his daughter, *Loyse Fourniez.* The *King's* barber-minister, *Oliver,* is in attendance on him. The talk at first is of *Nicole Andry,* sister to *Simon,* and of her name, The Fair Draper of Touraine, which, it is said, was bestowed on her in a song by *Gringoire,*—"a player and a merry knave," says *Simon,* "the most run after, and the least fed, of all the starvelings of the city." Soon the *King* adverts to State affairs, and intimates that he is engaged in circumventing the *Duke of Burgundy,* and that he purposes to dispatch *Simon Fourniez* into Flanders. The citizen is pleased, but he makes it known that he would prefer not to depart from home leaving his daughter unmarried. The *King* declares that he will find a husband for *Loyse,* and, upon her coming, broaches that delicate subject, only to hear her refusal to marry and that her heart is vacant. "I think my heart would love," she says, "if any such there be, a man who could be valiant as a captain, yet without the roughness of the camp; a hero in the cause

of others, yet as gentle as a woman. I dream of such a one." The talk comes to nothing, and *Loyse* coyly retires from the presence. "She refuses to wed," says the *King,* "because her heart has found no master; we must find one." At that moment a sound of laughter in the street is heard, and *Simon,* looking forth, perceives and names the strolling poet *Gringoire,* and that person again becomes the subject of remark. "A witty villain," says *Oliver;* "he has written unmannerly catches." "Gringoire is as giddy as a boy," says *Simon.* "The first time my eyes fell on him," says *Nicole Andry,* "some three years gone,—it was the churlish winter-time, when the wine froze in the soldiers' cans,—Gringoire was sitting under a porch, nursing in his arms two children who had wandered out into the cold, crying, to find their mother. He had taken off his sorry jerkin, full of holes, to warm their little limbs; and there he sat, singing them to sleep, with a hymn to the Virgin." The *King* is thoughtful for a moment, and then he says: "I would see this Gringoire." An objection made by *Oliver* is overruled, and the poet is brought into the monarch's presence. He is hungry, weak, pale, and startled; he does not recognize either the *King* or the barber. Then follows a scene of delicacy and suspense, in which *Oliver* tempts the starving minstrel, by the offer of food and wine, to recite a certain "Gibbet Song" that he has written, in rebuke of the cruelty of the *King;* and, that being done, the

crafty courtier names both himself and the sovereign, so that the poet may now know in what peril he stands. A situation of strength and beauty is thus provided. The *King,* concealing his purpose, gives permission that the vagabond shall eat. "There's no time to lose," exclaims *Gringoire,* "if this is the last banquet I shall ever have"; and he straightway attacks the food. A little wine suffices to stimulate his tired brain, and, half oblivious of the surroundings, and sinking abstractedly upon the *King's* chair, he drifts into a reverie of life, love, loss, and failure. "The world's no place for me," he says; "I have lived with the roses and the lilies. I have sung with the crickets. There are no little Gringoires to curse their inheritance of cold and hunger. There's nothing more to live for—not even a supper." Then he talks of his first view of *Fourniez's* house, and of an angel whom he saw at the window and ever since has worshipped. The *King,* who has all the while been watching him, now commands that all shall withdraw except the poet, and, being left alone with *Gringoire,* pardons him and suggests that he shall marry, and that his bride shall be this same angel, *Loyse Fourniez,* whom he has seen at her casement. The company is recalled. *Oliver* imparts bad tidings to the *King,* and thus throws him into a transport of rage and cruelty. There is an ominous conflict in the royal mind, between kindness and malignity. He will leave *Gringoire* for one hour alone with *Loyse,* and if at the end of that

time she has not accepted him for a husband he will have the audacious rhymer hanged. The maiden and the poet are thus confronted. The vagabond has long loved her, but, as his love is unselfish, he will do nothing to make her unhappy. He talks to her of the contrast between herself and a destitute poet. "You are sweet and comely as a rose; he, wan and suffering. You, rich, and richly clad; he, poor, hungry, and ragged. You, full of gladness; he, when not forced to make others laugh, all sorrowful. Such a sad suitor to you would be like coupling the night-owl to the skylark." He speaks then of the poet as the friend and champion of the poor and the wretched. The girl's heart is touched and her fancy is charmed by the nature thus disclosed. He will not woo her, however, and he will not even tell his name. The hour expires. The *King* returns. He has, meanwhile, triumphed over his treasonable enemies, and he is once more clement and kindly. The state of affairs with *Gringoire* soon becomes apparent. Not even to save his life has he descended to an ignoble action. *Loyse* has not learned from him either his offence, the penalty, or the terms of pardon. She learns them now. "My hero is here," she says, "and I am proud to be his helpmate, both in life and death."

Such a man as *Gringoire* is human nature at its best, for he is as pure as crystal, he devotes genius to the service of humanity, and, even in wretchedness and

destitution, and when the hands of wealth and power are held out to succor him, he can sacrifice love and life to the happiness of another and to the plain principle of honor. But it is not integrity alone that composes his nature. He is invested with the poet's freedom and he is capable of the poet's exaltation above the common world. Barrett comprehended that elemental difference. In acting *Gringoire* he discarded formalism and elocutionary effort, and suffered himself to drift upon the careless stream of emotion and circumstance. In his face and bearing, in the whole man as first presented, there were inherent, unstudied sweetness and kindness, tinged with wistful hesitancy; tinged also with a partly real and partly affected glee, and deeply suffused with the latent sadness of a thwarted life. In the reverie that reminiscent glow grew deeper, and the image stood boldly forth of a man who has entertained high ideals of life and love, but found them unattainable, and who smothers sorrow in his heart and will play out the rest of the play as sweetly and cheerfully as possible,—making others merry, if he cannot be merry himself. There is a note of deep passion in that scene, and the actor touched it firmly, so that his mood was then surcharged and vibrant with a solemn rapture. That is the moment when the poet sinks, unconsciously, into the seat reserved for the *King,* and conjures up the vision of the woman whom he loves. It was a triumph of natural instinct to realize

that mournful ecstasy, and an equally great triumph of art to express that nobility of feeling in a manner entirely noble. Barrett acted from profound and perfect sympathy with the essential principle of the character, the worship of ideal beauty in its moral and spiritual as well as its physical aspect. In the scene with *Loyse* the same high and sweet feeling was made to soften and control the human passion of the experience, and thus to give to the situation a beautiful dignity, without sacrificing its tender romance. In *Gringoire,* Barrett added to the heroes of the Stage a picturesque and eloquent figure, assumed with the grace of perfect simplicity. The personation, without heroics on the one hand or sentimentality on the other, carried to many hearts a deep sense of the high influence of poetry; a realization that even the ideals of a dreamer may have their practical use, and a deep perception of the chivalry that tells its mistress, in the immortal words of Lovelace,

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more."

"GANELON."

Lawrence Barrett's impersonation of *Ganelon,*—the hero of a tragedy, in blank verse, by William Young, —was the vital and sympathetic presentment of a type of chivalrous passion, tremulous intensity, and nervous

force, and one of the most characteristic of his performances. It repeatedly afforded occasion for that tempest of vocal fervor upon which, by reason of a superb voice and an impassioned and melodious delivery, his art always rode so well; and it required culminative feeling and continuous and diversified action. At every point the actor was adequate to the part, conveying the decisive sense of intellectual authority, natural power, and abundant theatrical equipment.

One of the attributes that distinguish the actor from the experimenter, the elocutionist, and the novice is the faculty of retrospective comprehension of character. Every human being has a history,—such as it is. Behind the present of every human being there is a past, and the experience of that past is recorded in each person's condition. In order to understand what a man truly is it is necessary to know what he has passed through; what he has suffered; what he has subdued; in what way he has conducted his life. Shakespeare's great characters owe their greatness to the fact, among others, that they were comprehensively conceived by him, each with its ample background of experience. They are not personifications of abstract ideas, cardinal virtues, or cardinal vices; neither are they theatrical puppets. The hero of a play, supposing him to be substantial, must have had his experience; and in the assumption of him that is given by a true actor not only his individuality will be expressed, but the warp will be

shown that his temperament has taken from the conditions of his birth, his breeding, his circumstances, his education, his vicissitudes, and his trials. Lawrence Barrett was always conspicuously fine in the felicity with which he grasped his author's ideal and the fidelity with which,—taking a wide view of character,—he conveyed it. When, for example, he paced upon the scene as *Cassius,* the whole background of the life of that austere Roman seemed to become visible. The intellectual majesty, the stern isolation, the cold aristocracy, the superb spirit, the unconquerable will, the exquisite refinement—all those qualities, fused into a type of proud ambition, iron purpose, and lonely grandeur, immediately suggested and defined a prodigious experience preliminary to such a result. All the men whom Barrett personated were sharply individualized. He saw them comprehensively; he invested himself with their distinct personalities; he made them actual men, while at the same time he sustained the element of charm in them by poetry of treatment in the expression of their characters.

To that group he added, in the same lofty spirit and with the same fine skill, the figure of *Ganelon,* a young French soldier,—a noble, ardent, impetuous, chivalrous gentleman,—whose youth has been clouded, whose spirit has been embittered, whose life has been violently wrenched from its natural posture and prospect, by the monstrous and afflicting disgrace of his father's dis-

covered, irrefutable, murderous treason. That father was the Ganelon who betrayed Charlemagne's paladin Roland (or Orlando, for he is designated by both names) at Roncesvalles, in the Pyrenees, in 778, stipulating however, and successfully arranging, that his son should be spared the ensuing massacre. Young *Ganelon,* horror-stricken, and moving ever beneath a pall of unmerited infamy,—the fatal inheritance of an ignominious name,—has left his country and has wandered far, intent on a war of vengeance against the Saracens, then potent in Spain, to whom his father had delivered the paladins of Charlemagne. In the Corsican city of Aleria, which is besieged by those Saracens, he finds his opportunity—and also he finds his doom. Aleria has been summoned to surrender. The Christian *Prince Colonna of Corsica* has decreed a sortie, to defeat the assailing infidels and disperse them. A leader is required to head the desperate charge. *Ganelon* will be that leader—but he wishes, as a reward, in the event of victory, that he may be married to the *Princess Bianca, Colonna's* daughter. That reward is promised, and thereupon he dashes furiously against the Saracens and scatters them in flight. But when he returns, and claims the royal and not unwilling bride, the *Prince* has listened to other counsel, and the reward is refused. *Ganelon,* crazed and desperate, utters a wild defiance and hurls himself to apparent and coveted death from a parapet of the royal town. He is not

killed, however, by his fall, but he is captured by the Saracens and thereupon, tempted by their leader, *Malec,* and maddened by a passionate sense of the injustice of *Colonna,* he reveals to the recuperated invaders a secret passage into Aleria, and himself conducts them into the city, which is thus taken and devastated. *Ganelon* has now repeated—with a difference—the crime of his father. For a life thus accursed and blasted there can be but one refuge; and when, presently, the *Princess Bianca,* aware of his turpitude, repels *Ganelon* as a traitor, he is whirled into yet another frenzy, in which he kills the Moorish leader, *Malec,* rejoins the Christian Corsicans, and, fighting desperately, is wounded to death. In his last moments he has *Bianca's* forgiveness, and he dies with the knowledge that if he had lived he might have had her love—a consummation which, considering who he was and how stigmatized, would have been a misfortune for both of them.

The fact in human experience upon which the structure of the play is reared is one that has been often illustrated in the history of the world and often enforced in works of fiction. Injustice, acting upon pride and sensibility in a brave, ardent, impetuous nature, will sometimes disorganize, in that nature, the foundations of moral principle; will shatter reason and integrity; will create a bitter revulsion of feeling; and thus will result in conduct which is not only the reckless but which

necessarily becomes the cruel and afflicting expression of resentment and fury. *Coriolanus,* ungratefully, unjustly, meanly banished from the Rome that he had saved and defended, joins with the Volscians and leads them to victory over his countrymen. Benedict Arnold, neglected and slighted by the military leaders whom he had valorously served, deserts the cause of Washington and madly heads a crusade of sword and fire against his birthplace and his friends. With what magnificent power and to what splendid advantage of immortal results the genius of Shakespeare has developed and applied the story of *Coriolanus* all thoughtful readers know. Benedict Arnold, whose story is full of meaning, has been put into drama, but not with success. In both those instances, however, there was a reflective consciousness, a coolness of purpose, that does not appear in the case of *Ganelon*—which is a case of malignant fate culminating in romantic frenzy.

The spectacle presented is that of pure tragedy. The sin of the father is visited upon the child. The endeavor of the youth to vindicate a dishonored name is useless and hopeless from the beginning. Had he remained simply a soldier and devoted himself to the slaughter of Saracens, he might perhaps have covered it with martial glory. When he became a lover and chose to be a suitor for a woman's hand—meaning to bring another life beneath the infamy unjustly, but

not the less certainly, impendent over his own—he encountered a fatal misfortune and made a selfish though unavoidable error. The visitation of love cannot be escaped. Conduct, however, can be regulated—unless there be a fate in the direction of events, as always is the case in tragedy. *Ganelon* has great qualities, but magnanimity and patience are not among them. The mainspring of his temperament is headlong impetuosity, and with him, as with other human beings, escape from self is impossible. He is not to be blamed. He can only be pitied. The tragedy is right in making no attempt to readjust the inexorable laws of nature. The man is shown in one picture after another of his intense reactions, his raptures, his explosive excitements, his frenzies of reckless deed,—of which the leap from the parapet of Aleria is the sufficient exponent,—and the portraiture is dramatic. He is a fountain of fiery life: it bursts through all restraint, and its wasted splendors are scattered and quenched in the black water of death. False by turns both to friend and enemy, he is all the time true—for his acts are not calculated treasons but insane paroxysms. He keeps the observer's sympathy and pity to the last; and in the contemplation of his pathetic and lamentable fate the mind is conscious of that ennobling grief,—that exalted commingling of terror at a mortal catastrophe and pity for an inevitable ruin,—which it is the distinctive province of tragedy to cause.

The placing of this story of a calamitous inheritance, a fatal love, a fatuous frenzy, and a pathetic death in the distant land of Corsica and in an historic period eleven hundred years ago might seem to have the effect of obscuring its outlines and deadening its significance. But as soon as the texture is examined it is found to be freshly interesting and replete with romantic elements; and, certainly, the writer of the tragedy has told it in a direct manner,—notwithstanding certain perilous interludes devoted to the Moors,—pointed his dramatic narrative with the emphatic effects of vigorous action, and written the needful soliloquies and colloquies in a fluent and polished strain of sonorous blank verse, which is an adequate vehicle for the conveyance of the piece.

The draft upon the resources of the actor of *Ganelon* is incessant and severe. He must irradiate the spirit that makes the drama live. He is incarnate action. He is the electrical presence in every scene. Barrett pervaded the play, equally with his personality and his polished art. There was thought in the substance of all that he achieved as an actor, and invariably there was delicate beauty in the form and detail of his accomplishment. In his expression of the horror and loathing with which a noble spirit revolts from the iniquity of wedding a woman against her will and in the scene of the attempted suicide his fine impetuosity was effective in the highest degree, and his impersonation of

Ganelon created a new figure in the realm of Stage romance.

In the production of the tragedy a wealth of pictorial scenery was used, to suggest the warlike state of Corsica in a remote historic period. Relief to the darkness of a tragical theme was not afforded by attempts at humor, but by action, incident, processions, pictures, music, and the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." And those were welcome. An observer who is compelled to see much of the acted drama grows weary of the heroes and heroines who are impelled by sexual infatuation. The changes have been rung upon that theme to an everlasting extent—until it almost seems as if there were nothing else in the world but the sentimental pother that precedes matrimony. Mature attention is prone to wander away from stage lovers. When it rested on such an actor as Barrett—admitting all his fervor as *Ganelon*—it much preferred to see him in *Cassius* or *Coriolanus;* past all the raptures and woes of amatory passion, and supreme on the high and shining tablelands of the intellect and the soul.

"YORICK'S LOVE."

The moral lessons that are deducible from stories of love that is false to its vows and of jealousy that culminates in deeds of blood are obvious and trite. It cannot be supposed that the value, to a spectator, of such a play as "Yorick's Love" resides in its moral les-

sons. Everybody knows that a breach of the marriage contract is not justifiable by the plea of a change of heart, even though that change be natural and involuntary; and everybody knows that if jealousy becomes madness and madness commits murder the crime is one that humanity in general will deplore rather than condemn. A tragic play, to possess valuable import, must be more than a rehearsal of platitudes or a reiteration of the Ten Commandments. Nor does such a work become useful to others merely because it serves an actor as the vehicle for a felicitous manifestation of his professional skill. "Yorick" presents a spectacle of human trial and misery; and such a spectacle, faithfully copied from life and then transfigured in a work of art, will have power over the heart and ennobling significance to the mind, first by reason of sympathetic fidelity in its portraiture, and then by reason of its illumination of the conditions under which humanity is governed.

That tragedy, indeed, somewhat troubles the sense of justice by causing fatal consequences to flow from a venial and not a guilty fault, and perhaps its afflictive force is impaired by that error of construction. But as a picture of the pathetic, agonizing, tragical entanglements which constantly arise in human experience it remains essentially and touchingly true. Here is a man of middle age, a noble creature every way, whose being is absorbed by the passion of love for his young wife: here is a young woman, naturally good, who has married

an elderly man, out of kindness and affection, only to find, too late, that marriage must rest on a far more imperious feeling: here is the handsome young lover who, in complete innocence and without volition, awakens the woman's heart and readily wins it from a husband who is merely respected: and here is wicked enmity personified in a soured and embittered man, smarting under that wound to vanity which low and common natures can never bear and will never forgive. It is an old, old story; even without ingenuity of plot and felicity of dramatic treatment and of language it would possess an impressive meaning. The thing to contemplate is the situation—the relation to one another into which innocent persons are driven, by no act of their own—the terrible hardships that fate imposes on them and the awful catastrophe that inevitably ensues. The youthful lovers cannot help either their passion or their anguish. The poor old actor, fallen into the sear and yellow, cannot help his frantic jealousy, his despair, his madness, his rash acts of fatal retribution. No attempt is made to soften those facts of life. Facts they are, and experience vouchsafes no comment on those grim pictures of disaster. All we can know is that the story of human life is full of such events, and that the highest wisdom, and only possible refuge, is endurance. "Yorick" succeeded because it paints the life of the passions truthfully and speaks simply this word to illumine its picture.

Lawrence Barrett, as *Yorick,* was adequate at every point, and he gave a noble and touching performance. His ideal of the comedian, who deeply feels the serious aspect of life and would like to play tragedy, was especially right and fine, in this respect, among others, that it was of precisely the sort of man whom a commonplace young woman would like but could neither love nor understand. The gentle humility of a fine nature was expressed by him with sweet and natural self-depreciation, so that *Yorick* was made wistful, and he would have been almost forlorn but for his guileless trust and his blithe, eager, childlike spirit. An ordinary girl would be flattered by the love of such a man, and would be quite content with him, as long as she did not love somebody else. The pitiable character of this disparity was especially enforced, though indirectly—which was all the better art—by the free play, the abandonment, that was given to an honest, confiding, simple, happy heart. *Yorick,* indeed, is made to talk too much when his hour of trial and misery comes: sorrow speaks little. But Barrett, with signal power and splendid method, subordinated verbosity to intense feeling, thus enforcing Wordsworth's wise precept:

> "Keep, ever keep, as if by touch
> Of self-restraining art,
> The modest charm of not too much—
> Part seen, imagined part."

XXVII.

JAMES LEWIS.

1838—1896.

A PROMINENT representative type of character is "the humorous man," and that is Shakespeare's phrase to describe him. Wit is a faculty; humor an attribute. Joseph Addison, Laurence Sterne, Washington Irving, whatever else they might have been, were humorists. *Sir Roger de Coverley, Tristram Shandy, Uncle Toby, Diedrich Knickerbocker, Ichabod Crane*—those and other creations of their genius stand forth on their pages to exemplify that aspect of their minds. But the humorist of the pen may, personally, be no humorist at all. Addison's character was austere. Irving, though sometimes gently playful, was essentially grave and decorous.

Comic quality in the humorous man whom nature destines for the Stage must be personal. His coming brings with it a sense of comfort. His presence warms the heart and cheers the mind. The sound of his voice, "speaking off," before he emerges on the scene, will set the theatre in a roar. This was notably true of Burton and of William Warren. The glance, motion, carriage, manner, and the pause and quiescence of such

a man, instil merriment. Cibber says that Robert Nokes had a palpable simplicity of nature which was often as unaccountably diverting in his common speech as on the stage. John E. Owens, describing the conduct of a bee in an empty molasses barrel, once threw a circle of his hearers, of whom I was one, almost into convulsions of laughter. Artemus Ward made the spectator laugh the moment he appeared, by his wooden composure and portentous sapience of demeanor. The lamented Daniel E. Setchell, a comedian who would have been as famous as he was funny had he lived longer, presented a delightful example of spontaneous humor. I recall the simple gravity, not demure but perfectly solemn, with which, on the deck of a Hudson River steamboat, as we were passing West Point, he indicated to me the Kosciuszko Monument, saying briefly, "That's the place where Freedom shrieked." It was the quality of his temperament that made his playfulness delicious. Setchell was the mental descendant of Burton, as Burton was of Reeve, and as Reeve was of Liston. Actors illustrate a kind of heredity. Each species is distinct and discernible. Lester Wallack was of the lineage of Charles Kemble, William Lewis, and Elliston,—a line in which John Drew has gained distinction. John Gilbert's artistic ancestry could be traced back through Farren and Munden to King and Quin, and perhaps still further, to Lowin and Kempe.

The comedian intrinsically comic, while in his char-

acteristic quality eccentric and dry, was exemplified, in the earlier days of our Stage, by Fawcett, Blisset, Finn, and Barnes, and in our own time was conspicuously presented by James Lewis. No one ever saw him without laughter—and it was kindly laughter, with a warm heart behind it. The moment he came on the stage an eager gladness diffused itself throughout his audience. His quaintness and unconscious drollery captured all hearts. His whimsical individuality never varied; yet every character of the many that he portrayed stood clearly forth among its companions, a distinct, unique embodiment. The graceful urbanity, the elaborate yet natural manner, the brisk vitality, the humorous sapience of *Sir Patrick Lundy*—how completely and admirably he expressed them! How distinct that fine old figure is in the remembrance of all who saw it! But he never played a part that he did not make equally distinct. A painter might fill a gallery with odd, characteristic creations by merely copying his compositions of "make-up." The amiable professor, in "A Night Off"; the senile *Gunnion,* in "The Squire"; *Lissardo,* in "The Wonder"; *Grumio,* in "The Shrew"—those and many more he made his own; while in the actor's province of making comic characters really comical to others there has been no comedian in our day who better fulfilled the sagacious, comprehensive injunction of Munden (imparted to a youthful actor who spoke of being "natural" in order to amuse), "Nature be damned! Make the people laugh!"

That, aside from all subtleties, is not a bad test of the comic faculty, and that test was met and borne by the acting of James Lewis.

But that was not all. Lewis did much more than "make the people laugh." He touched their hearts, he entered into their lives, and he gained their friendship. He was an uncommon man, and he was a comedian of a high order. A more conscientious, thorough, scrupulously fastidious actor has not been known in our time. He acted many parts and he acted every part well. Some of the characters in which he appeared were alien to his temperament and inharmonious with his physical peculiarities, yet he embodied them with a fidelity that made them credible and that no one of his contemporaries could have excelled. Not discarding his individuality—which no person can do—he ever strove to merge himself in the character he represented, and to this design he was strenuously devoted. His death, indeed, was precipitated by the feverish anxiety and incessant nervous strain, superadded to fatigue, which attended his work of preparation for the arduous part of *Falstaff*, which he was to have acted, in a revival of "King Henry IV." that Augustin Daly had arranged to effect at his theatre in the season of 1896-'97.

James Lewis (it was one of his foibles to be secretive as to his age) was born at Troy, New York, in 1838. He adopted the profession of the Stage early in life and for a long time he worked his way in the cities

in the western part of his native state. His first appearance in New York was made in 1866, at Mrs. John Wood's Olympic Theatre, and he first attracted special attention as a clever actor of burlesque, in which vein his drollery, his expert vocalism, and the vivacity of his action, combined with a fine finish of executive art, made him delightful. His humor and his faculty of impersonation were at once recognized. He was acting in burlesque at the house known as Lina Edwards's Theatre (it had formerly been the Rev. Dr. Osgood's church), situated in Broadway, opposite the old New York Hotel, when he first attracted the attention of Augustin Daly; and when, in the autumn of 1869, Daly began theatrical management, opening the Fifth Avenue Theatre, in Twenty-fourth Street, Lewis was engaged as a member of the numerous and remarkable dramatic company then assembled by that manager; and thenceforward to the end of his life he remained under Daly's management. In that association, as opportunities were provided for him and as his mind broadened and his humor mellowed, his dramatic faculties seemed to become more and more brilliant, year after year, while the range of his capabilities increased and, through accumulation of successes, his reputation was steadily augmented.

Lewis was instinctively an actor, and the histrionic faculty natural to him was developed and matured by diligent study and continuous, laborious practice of his

art. He belonged to an earlier time than ours, and to a class of actors which has been largely depleted and now is exceedingly small. No actor comparable with Lewis, in his peculiar line, has appeared in our Theatre since his death, with the exception of that superb comedian John Hare, and no actor could be found to-day competent to fill his place. The comedian who most nearly approximates to Lewis is William Sampson, an actor whose style was, in great measure, formed through association with him. The type of "comedian" now generally approved and accepted is signified by such popular performers as Jefferson de Angelis, "Sam" Bernard, "Lew" Fields, "Joe" Weber, and E. Fitzgerald Foy,—mummers whose methods commingle buffoonery, horse-play, affectation, and vulgarity.

A true actor is not a mountebank. A comedian is not a clown. Lewis was an artist. He caused effects in acting not by grimace, posturing, and extravagance, but by getting inside of characters and permitting his droll humor to permeate them and to show itself through amusing peculiarities of demeanor and felicities of comic expression, visual and vocal. For each of the many parts that he played he provided a distinct identity and an appropriate, characteristic "make-up," and each part that he thus presented was a coherent, consistent, authentic type of credible human nature,—the pervasive quality of all being genial, comic eccentricity. In temperament he was serious; in social intercourse kindly and playful,

perceiving the comic side of things and often making quizzical comment on them. In appearance, while not in the least grotesque, he was slightly peculiar. His figure was below the middle height and slender, but straight and wiry; his facial aspect was grave, sedate, genial, and pleasing; his eyes, which slightly protruded, were blue, and were bright and "snappy" in expression; his nose was long and thin; his mouth large, with thin lips; his voice was high and incisive, and his utterance was clear, sharp, and effective; his hair was of a sandy color and thin; his hands were slender and delicate; his feet were very small, and he moved lightly, quickly, and with grace. His dress was notable for scrupulous neatness. He was not an exquisite in costume, but every article of clothing that he wore was tasteful and becoming. He was never ostentatious, either in private life or on the stage. In acting he was generous toward his associates, and he never wearied his audience by showing effort or by lingering on points and effects when once made. His personations were fashioned by careful thought; he knew what he meant to do, and he knew how to do it. When he had chosen a course he followed it precisely, and by the exercise of seemingly spontaneous art he produced the perfect effect of nature.

The death of Lewis occurred suddenly, on September 10, 1896, at his home in Long Island, and he was buried in Woodlawn. The loss was a bitter bereavement, as well for Society as for the Stage. The quaint figure,

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JAMES LEWIS.

brisk, blithe presence, kindly face, and familiar, chirrupy voice are not forgotten and often they are sadly missed. It was deplorable that the fine comedian should have been taken away before he had been privileged to embody his ideal of *Falstaff* for the public he had served so long and to which he so much desired to prove his capability of acting that great part. He would, undoubtedly, have manifested much of the intellectual character, if not all of the unctuous humor, of that wonderful Shakespearean conception. But—he had lived a good life and had done enough for his fame. He will be remembered among the best actors of his day. He was a gentle person, thoughtful of the welfare of others, staunch in the performance of duty, and his memory and example are treasured in many hearts.

XXVIII.

AUGUSTIN DALY.

1838—1899.

Augustin Daly was born in Plymouth, North Carolina, on July 20, 1838, and he died in Paris, France, on June 7, 1899. He began his career in 1860, as an editorial writer and a dramatic critic for "The New York Sunday Courier,"—a paper edited by Charles F. Briggs, who was well and widely known as "Harry Franco," but later, without relinquishing journalism, he adventured as a dramatist. On December 8, 1862, an adaptation of Mosenthal's "Deborah," made by him, and entitled "Leah the Forsaken," was brought out at the Boston Museum, with Kate Bateman in the leading part. It made a hit, and in January, 1863, that actress presented it at Niblo's Garden, New York, where it had a run of nine weeks. It still is occasionally acted.

In 1864 an adaptation of "La Papillonne," made by Daly and Frank Wood, was produced at Laura Keene's Theatre, where it had a run of four weeks. Matilda (Mrs. John) Wood and Frank Drew played the chief parts. In the same year Daly adapted three French

plays, "Leslie's Wedding," "Judith," and "The Sorceress." Mme. Methua-Scheller produced the first of them, at the Winter Garden, where it was acted for two weeks; Avonia Stanhope Jones (1839-1867) produced the other two, at the same theatre. "The Sorceress" was a grim, weird, effective play. In that year also Daly added to his occupations that of dramatic critic of "The New York Express," now (1912) "The Evening Mail." In 1866 he brought out, at the New York Theatre, a drama on the subject of Charles Reade's novel of "Griffith Gaunt," Rose Eytinge playing the wife of the jealous husband. It ran for seven weeks. In that year also Daly became dramatic critic of "The New York Sun."

In 1867 he produced his first entirely original play, a piece called "Under the Gas-Light," which made an instant hit and had a run of thirteen weeks at the New York Theatre, four weeks in Boston, seven weeks in Philadelphia, and five weeks in San Francisco. It has since been acted throughout America and in Europe. Its chief stage effect, the passing of a railway train and the rescue of a man whose enemies have bound him and laid him on the track, was afterward appropriated by Dion Boucicault, in his drama called "After Dark," but Daly substantiated in court his claim to the invention of that expedient.

In 1867 also Daly became dramatic critic of both "The New York Daily Times" and "The New York

Weekly Citizen," and thus he was a reviewer of the acted Drama for five newspapers in New York at the same time. Those positions he, one by one, resigned, toward the close of that year.

Co-laboring with another journalist, Joseph Howard, Jr., Daly made a play on the basis of Henry Ward Beecher's novel of "Norwood" and that piece, produced in 1867, had a run of four weeks, at the house, in Broadway, called the New York Theatre,—where also were acted a play, made by him on "The Pickwick Papers," and his second original drama, "A Flash of Lightning."

On August 16, 1869, he began management, opening his first Fifth Avenue Theatre, in Twenty-fourth Street, on the site of the house afterward called the Madison Square Theatre. That house had once before been styled the Fifth Avenue Theatre, when conducted by Thaddeus Glover, a journalist and an experimental manager. Daly opened it with Robertson's comedy of "Play," subsequently produced Olive Logan's "Surf," and later began representation of such French plays as are typified by "Frou-Frou" and "Fernande." Twenty-three plays, three of them by Shakespeare, were produced by him in his first season at that house, and fifty-nine plays, in all, had been produced there before the final curtain fell. The theatre was burnt down, January 1, 1873, much valuable property,—scenery, costumes, stage furniture, manuscripts, and

books,—being consumed. On January 21, the expeditious manager resumed business, having leased and, within sixteen days, rehabilitated the New York Theatre, which he named the Fifth Avenue Theatre, and which he opened with an Address, in verse, by John Brougham, and with an adaptation of the French play of "La Comtesse de Somerive," entitled "Alixe." Clara Morris acted the chief part, *Alixe,* and gave one of the most striking and affecting of all her performances. That house was kept open, as the Fifth Avenue Theatre, only until June 28, but Daly retained management of it—calling it the Broadway Theatre and presenting miscellaneous attractions,—till April, 1874. Meanwhile he had obtained a lease of a theatre in Twenty-eighth Street, called the St. James, and, having altered and refitted it, he reopened it as the New Fifth Avenue Theatre, on December 3, 1873, with an Address by Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Alberry's comedy of "Fortune."

Coincident with other labors he managed the Grand Opera House for two seasons, beginning on August 26, 1872. There he produced "Le Roi Carotte," "Round the Clock," "The Cataract of the Ganges," "Roughing It," "Uncle Sam," "Under the Gas-Light," and "A Round of Pleasure," and he also presented Charles Fechter there, in "Monte Cristo," "The Corsican Brothers," and "Ruy Blas." The third Fifth Avenue Theatre remained under the management of

Daly until late in the spring of 1877, when he retired from it, and, temporarily, from active theatrical life, passing some time in London. On September 17, 1879, he reappeared in the New York dramatic field, and opened Daly's Theatre, where it now stands, at the southwest corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street, with "Love's Young Dream" and "Newport." That theatre he conducted till his death. Daly's Theatre, Leicester Square, London, was opened by him on June 27, 1893.

Daly's various and numerous contributions to theatrical literature gained for him a prominent and honorable place among the dramatic authors of his time, but his distinction in management overshadowed his distinction in authorship. His dramatic companies included many distinguished actors. He accomplished superb Shakespearean productions with Mrs. Scott Siddons, Fanny Davenport, Ada Dyas, Carlotta Leclercq, and Ada Rehan. He introduced to the Stage Clara Morris, Agnes Ethel, Catharine Lewis, Fanny Davenport, Sara Jewett, and Ada Rehan—to mention only a few of the women whom he helped to make famous. E. L. Davenport, Walter Montgomery, and Fanny Janauschek, in tragedy, and Charles Mathews, John Gilbert, William Davidge, John Brougham, James Lewis, Charles Fisher, George Holland, and Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, in comedy, acted under his leadership, and at various times he was manager for Edwin Booth,

Joseph Jefferson, and Adelaide Neilson. To his fostering care the public is indebted for the development of that fine comedy talent—that crisp vivacity and charm —for which John Drew is justly admired. Daly introduced to the American Stage, in December, 1874, the fine Spanish play of "Yorick's Love," adapted by W. D. Howells. He produced "Saratoga," the first of the late Bronson Howard's comedies, and he presented other plays from the same prolific and polished pen. His revivals, sixteen in number, of Old English Comedy preserved the best traditions of Wallack's Theatre, and he opened for the American public the broad and opulent field of German farce. He was Wallack's natural successor, and for about twenty-five years he held, without question, the leadership of the American Stage.

His faculties ranged over a broad field. Mention of his achievement suggests the foresight and courage with which he planned and conducted his career, the skill with which, while duly considering the demands of a capricious public taste, he ministered to its better impulses and higher desires, and that power of forecasting results and of bending every energy resolutely and patiently toward their accomplishment which is one secret of success. The play-going public was greatly benefited by his sagacious labors, but probably the most substantial service that he rendered to his time is signified in the renown of Ada Rehan.

The death of Augustin Daly removed the most dis-

tinguished figure among the dramatic managers of America since the time of Lester Wallack, and the most powerful intellectual force operant in management of the American Theatre since the best days of Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett. Daly was animated by the highest ambition; in his relations with the Stage he was conscious of a solemn responsibility and he acted from conscientious and noble motives. The early part of his career as a manager was, naturally, marked by some wildness of experiment, but he soon obtained a firm control of the business and of his resources, and he then shaped the policy of aiming at the best, and from that purpose he never deviated. He gathered the ablest men and women in the dramatic profession; he presented the best plays that were available; he made the Theatre important, and he kept it worthy of the sympathy and support of the most refined taste and the best intellect of his time. His fertility of resource seemed inexhaustible. He was quick to decide, and the energy with which he moved, in the execution of his plans, was the more splendid because it was neither deranged by tumult nor marred by ostentation. As long as he had a finely intelligent public with which to deal, and until actors of the old school began to die away, giving place to the cohorts of the drawing-room, he touched nothing that did not succeed. He earned a high renown, and he left an imperishable example. His character was marked by some eccentricities,—for he

liked to hide his feelings and to seem indifferent and hard,—but it was a thin disguise. He had encountered much selfishness and much ingratitude, and his experience had made him stern in judgment and somewhat cold and austere in manner, but those who knew him well knew that his probity was like a rock, and they remember him as a man of inflexible principle, affectionate heart, and a temperament marked by simplicity, generosity, and tenderness. The passion of his life was to deserve true success and beneficent power, in his vocation, by the genuine and unquestionable merit of his deeds. His life was free from pretence and flurry. He had a distinct design, and he worked for its accomplishment with an industry that never slept. He was deeply religious, a devout Roman Catholic, and his absolute faith, combining with his great firmness and force of character, made him resolute to meet every trial and calm in the face of every danger. It is difficult to realize that a power so fervent and so splendid is forever extinguished, and that a spring of so much personal goodness, so much hope for the Stage, and so much benefit for the community is frozen at its source. He died as he would have wished to die,—at the summit of his career, in the active pursuit of those worthy purposes to which his life had been devoted and by which his being was controlled. There were no broken hopes, no defeated ambitions, no bitter realizations of public neglect, no backward glances of sad regret. He passed

away in the bright meridian of an honorable renown, and all clamors of opposition, gibes of envy, and stings of malice are buried in thick laurels of love and honor on his grave.

MONODY FOR AUGUSTIN DALY.

Long he slumbers: will he waken, greeting, as he used to do,
With his kindly, playful smile, his old companions, me and you?

Long he slumbers,—though the wind of morning sweetly blows to sea,
Though his barque has weighed her anchor, and the tide is flowing free.

Long he slumbers: why, so helpless, doth he falter on the shore?
Wherefore stays he in the silence, he that never stayed before?

"Do not wake me!" Oh, the pity! How shall we, poor toilers, strive,
If his strong and steadfast spirit keep not our frail hope alive?

All his days were giv'n to action, all his powers of mind and will:
Now the restless heart is silent, and the busy brain is still.

Gone the fine ideal fancies, glorious, like the summer dawn!
Ev'ry passionate throb of purpose, ev'ry dream of grandeur gone!

Courage, patience, deep devotion, long endurance, manly trust,
Zeal for truth, and love for beauty,—gone, and buried in the dust!

Ah, what pictures rise in mem'ry, and what strains of music flow,
When we think of all the magic times and scenes of Long Ago!

When once more we hear, in Arden, rustling trees and rippling
streams;
When on fair Olivia's palace faint and pale the moonlight beams;

When the storm-clouds break and scatter, and o'er beach, and
crag, and wave
Angels float, and heavenly voices haunt the gloom of Prosp'ro's
cave!

Well he wrought—and we remember! Faded rainbow! Fallen
leaf!
All fair things are but as shadows, and all glory ends in grief.

Worn and weary with the struggle, broken with the weight of care,
Low he lies, and all his pageants vanish in the empty air.

Nevermore can such things lure us, nevermore be quite the same:
Other hands may grasp the laurel, other brows be twined with fame.

Far, and less'ning in the distance, dies the music of the Past;
In our ears a note discordant vibrates like an angry blast;

On our eyes the Future rushes, blatant, acrid, fraught with strife,
Arrogant with tinsell'd youth, and rank with flux of sensual life.

Naught avails to stem the tumult,—vulgar aims and common-
place,
Greed, and vice, and dross, and folly, frenzied in the frantic race.

Naught avails, and we that linger, sick at heart and old and grim,
Can but pray to leave this rabble, loving Art and following him.

Very lonely seems the pathway; long we journey'd side by side;
Much with kindred hope were solaced, much with kindred anguish
tried;

Had our transient jars and murmurs, had our purpose to be blest,
In our brotherhood of travel, in our dreams of age and rest,—

Yonder, where the tinted hawthorns scarlet poppy-fields enfold,
And the prodigal laburnum blooms in clust'ring globes of gold.

Ended all!—and all is shadow, where but late a glory shone,
And the wand'rer, gray and fragile, walks the vacant scene, alone.

Only now the phantom faces that in waking dreams appear!
Only now the aërial voices that the heart alone can hear!

Round and red the sun is sinking, lurid in its misty light,
Faintly sighs the wind of evening, coldly falls the brooding night.

Fare thee well,—forever parted, speeding onward in the day
Where, through God's supernal mercy, human frailties drop away!

Fare thee well; while o'er thy ashes softly tolls the funeral knell,—
Peace, and love, and tender mem'ry! So, forever, fare thee well!

XXIX.

HELENA MODJESKA.

1840—1909.

Helena Modjeska was a native of Poland, born in Cracow, October 12, 1840,—although the year of her birth has been variously stated, all the way from 1840 to 1846. Her maiden name was Helena Opid. At an early age she was married to Gustave S. Modrzejewski; in 1865 they separated, and a year or two later he died. When she first acted in America John McCullough suggested that she change her name for stage use, which accordingly she did, shortening Modrzejewska to Modjeska. Her first appearance on the stage, an amateur effort, was made at Bochnia, 1861, in a one-act comedy called "The White Camellia." She succeeded, attracted attention, received encouragement, became an actress, and so she remained until nearly the end of her life. She died, at East Newport, a village in California, on the verge of the Pacific Ocean, about forty miles southwest of Los Angeles, on April 8, 1909. She had long been in frail health and her death did not come with a shock of surprise, but it was not the less a cause of abiding grief. She had been a conspicuous figure in

the Theatre of Europe as well as of America, and although her professional career had been ended and she had retired into private life she had not been forgotten. She was a sweet and gracious woman, widely and deeply loved as such, as well as admired as a great artist, and her memory will endure. To think of her now is to recall many an hour of delight in the company of creations of her exquisite art, and to remember a presence of tender, poetic beauty, winning refinement, and perfect grace. For many and many a day the old playgoer, musing on the Past, will cherish among his sweetest recollections those that cluster around the loved and honored name of Helena Modjeska. Her ministrations taught the precious truth that poetry is not a dream, but that genius can make it the inspiration of conduct and the abiding incentive to every virtue. It is sometimes hard indeed to believe that so much goodness is gone from the world and that only the sad consolation of fond remembrance survives.

Modjeska had a varied and interesting career. After the death of Modrzejewski she continued to act in her native land, playing many parts and developing her powers. In 1868 she became the wife of Charles [Karol] Bozenta Chlapowski, a Polish gentleman and patriot, who, fascinated by her as an actress, had followed her from town to town, and finally obtained an introduction to her. Bozenta was a cadet of a noble family in Poland, but not a Count, although, in America, generally

From a Painting by Carolus Duran.
In the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

HELENA MODJESKA.

designated by that title. Her married life, notwithstanding vicissitudes, was one of exceptional felicity. After her marriage to Bozenta she appeared at Warsaw, and gained brilliant success, as *Adrienne Lecouvreur,*—always one of her best personations,—but she soon returned to Cracow, where Bozenta was managing a partisan political journal, and where she ardently plunged into politics. Later she went again to the Warsaw theatre,—her husband having determined to resign his editorial position and devote his energies to her advancement as an actress. At Warsaw Modjeska acted many parts, showing extraordinary ability and winning much favor, but also she aroused jealousy and envy, alike in social circles and the Theatre. Her political principles and those of her husband were radical, and as they were believed to be exerting an insurrectionary influence they were often harassed, especially by governmental influence, exerted through the dramatic censorship. For this reason they deemed it advisable to emigrate to America, planning to establish a Polish colony, on something like the model of Brook Farm. In 1876 that project was carried into effect. Modjeska and her husband sailed from Bremen on the steamer Donau, and presently, after many trials, in company with a party of eight persons, settled in Southern California, under the name of Bozenta (a name more readily pronounced by Americans than Chlapowski), and undertook to manage a chicken farm. The

enterprise was not successful, and, in 1877, having acquired a slight knowledge of the English language, Modjeska determined to return to the stage. She, accordingly, went to San Francisco and applied to the late Barton Hill,—then stage manager of the California Theatre, of which John McCullough was the director,—for an engagement. Hill had little if any knowledge of the foreign Stage, and he knew nothing of Modjeska's ability and reputation. Her rare personal beauty, distinction, self-confidence, and persistence finally won from him a reluctant promise of a private hearing. That promise, after interposing several delays, he fulfilled, and Modjeska's story, as she told it to me, of her first rehearsal at the California Theatre was piquant and comic. Hill was a worthy man and a good actor. It was, no doubt, natural and right that, in dealing with a stranger applicant for theatrical employment, he should have exercised the functions of his position, but there will always be something ludicrous in the thought of Barton Hill sitting in judgment on Helena Modjeska. "He was very kind—Meester Hill," said the actress; "but he was ne-ervous and fussy, and he patronized me as though I were a leetle child. 'Now,' he said, 'I shall be very criti-cal—ve-ery *severe.*' I could be patient no longer: 'Be as critical and severe as you like,' I burst out, 'only do, please, *be quiet,* and let us begin!' He was so surprised he could not speak, and I began at once a scene from 'Adrienne.' I

played it through and then turned to him. He had his handkerchief in his hand and was crying. He came and shook hands with me and tried to seem quite calm. 'Well,' I asked, 'may I have the evening that I want?' 'I'll give you a week, and more, if I can,' he answered.

Modjeska made her first appearance on the American Stage, at the California Theatre, San Francisco, on August 20, 1877, as *Adrienne Lecouvreur,* and gained an immediate victory. Later she made a tour of California towns, acting *Adrienne, Juliet,* and *Camille.* On December 22, 1877, she appeared for the first time in New York, at the New Fifth Avenue Theatre, in Twenty-eighth Street (then managed by Daniel H. Harkins and Stephen Fiske), as *Adrienne*—when it was my good fortune to witness her performance and my privilege, in my professional capacity, to hail her as a great actress. Her subsequent career was, for many years, one of continuous professional triumph. She visited Poland in 1878 and acted in several cities. In 1879 she returned to America. In 1880 she visited England and appeared in London, with decisive success, at the Court Theatre, the Princess', and the Haymarket. Her first performance in that capital was given in an English version, by James Mortimer, of "La Dame aux Camélias," called "Heartsease." She became a social favorite in London and was much followed and admired. She also acted in the British provinces. The next year she filled another engagement in London.

In 1882 she again visited Poland and acted there, producing, among other plays, Ibsen's "A Doll's House," under the name of "Nora." Thence she returned to America, and reappeared, December 11, 1882, at Booth's Theatre. In 1883 she produced "A Doll's House," for the first time in America, under the name of "Thora." During 1884-'85 she made professional tours, under the direction of her husband, in Poland and in England. In 1889-'90 she acted in association with Edwin Booth,—a fine combination of histrionic forces, brought about by Lawrence Barrett, and inspired, in part, by observation of the prosperity and power of the Irving-Terry alliance. But it was made too late; Modjeska was then past middle age, and Booth's career was ending: he acted for the last time on April 4, 1891, and died in 1893. In 1895 Modjeska was, by imperial ukase, prohibited from entering "any part of the Russian territory," in consequence of a speech delivered by her, at the World's Fair, in Chicago, in 1893, denunciatory of the Russian Government.

Modjeska's repertory, while she was at the Imperial Theatre, in Warsaw, included more than a hundred characters,—among them being Shakespeare's *Juliet, Beatrice, Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, Katharine, Queen Anne,* and *Cleopatra;* Goethe's *Margaret,* and also *Phèdre, Tisbé, Mary Stuart,* and *Joan of Arc.* On the American Stage she embodied most of those parts, as well as *Adrienne, Camille, Frou-Frou, Magda, Rosalind,*

Viola, Imogen, Queen Katharine, Isabella, and *Lady Macbeth.* She retired from the stage in 1895, in consequence of a slight paralytic stroke, suffered in Cincinnati. In 1897 she reappeared. In 1900-'01 she produced "King John." In 1902 she visited Europe for the last time. In 1904 I visited her at her mountain home, "Arden," near El Tovar, California. There we discussed various plans, and her reappearance on the stage as *Hermione,* with Elsie Leslie as *Perdita,* was planned,—a project which her continued frail health frustrated. In 1905 she was the recipient of a testimonial benefit, at the Metropolitan Opera House, in New York, and made her farewell appearance in that city, as *Lady Macbeth.* Notable participants in the Testimonial were Ada Rehan, Louis James, James O'Neill, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, David Bispham, and John E. Kellerd. An intermittent tour of the country followed, ending in 1907, after which Modjeska sought seclusion and rest in California, at "Arden," and at Newport.

During her long professional career, though Modjeska was "presented" by various managers, her personal representative was her husband, Bozenta,—one of the kindest, most intellectual, and most drolly eccentric men it has been my fortune to know. Neither he nor his wife was judicious in worldly matters, while—as is not unusual in such cases—both thought themselves exceptionally shrewd and capable. Their professional labors were abundantly remunerative, but,

being improvident and generous, they did not accumulate wealth. The close of Modjeska's life, contrasted with the brilliancy of her career, was pathetic and forlorn. I called on her, a few months before her death, in the refuge, a little cottage, she had found, at East Newport. The great actress greeted me with gentle kindness and presently, as though my coming had reminded her of other days and scenes, she looked about the small narrow room in which we were. "Ah, it ees small," she said, "very small, this place of ours. But, what of that? It ees large enough for two old people to sit in—and *wait.*" As I came away her lovely eyes were suffused with tears. She looked at me long and fixedly. "Good-by, my good friend," was all she said. She seemed to foresee that it was our last parting. I never saw her again. Modjeska's funeral occurred on April 11, 1909, at St. Vibiana's Cathedral, Los Angeles. Her body was then brought to New York, where, on July 2, funeral services were performed, at the Church of St. Stanislaus, in Seventh Street, near Second Avenue. On July 3 her bereaved and sorrowing husband sailed with her body, on board the Auguste Victoria, for Hamburg. On July 15 he reached Cracow, where the mortal remains of the great actress lay in state, for two days, in the Church of the Holy Cross. Final obsequies and interment occurred in that city, on July 17.

No artist more delicate and subtle than Helena Modjeska has appeared among the women of the

Stage. Her power was limited; but she exhibited a rare dramatic intelligence; the atmosphere of her mind and art was essentially poetic; her execution was marked by exquisite refinement and grace and by perfect self-control and precision; she possessed innate distinction to an extraordinary degree; great personal charm; a winning, expressive voice; lovely simplicity of manner, and a rich, sensuous beauty; she manifested beautiful purity of spirit, and, within her special field, exceptional tragic force, amounting at times to authentic power. The works of an actress thus qualified must impart pleasure, since she will always set many beautiful ideals clearly before the mind, give melodious utterance to poetic thoughts, express with sweetness delicious traits of woman-like character, and exemplify with trained and competent skill felicities of dramatic art. Persons who suppose that inspiration in acting is voluntary were sometimes disappointed by her, finding her cold,—for Modjeska, like all great artists, was not invariably able to liberate all her faculties and rise to her loftiest height.

ADRIENNE AND *CAMILLE.*

The embodiments of *Adrienne* and *Camille* given by Modjeska defined her genius and established her rank. The performance of *Adrienne* was not only beautiful in itself but massive and splendid in its denotements of the mind and spirit behind it. It was instinct with sensibility and spiritual exaltation. It was the image of

a woman who typifies exquisite natural refinement, consummate elegance of manners, and the sanctity and magnanimity of passionate love. It was more than the faithful, finished copy of a dramatic ideal: it was a revelation of the royal wealth of soul and supremacy of mind that can make human nature sublime. To express the highest passion of which humanity is capable, and to express it as tempered by purity and nobility, is to accomplish the utmost that genius can reach. There are other and different peaks, but there is no higher one than that. Remembrance, dwelling on the method by which the actress sustained herself at that height, recalls that her intonation, gesture, movement, and play of countenance were spontaneous; that even her garments, devised and fashioned with sumptuous and delicate taste, seemed a part of the fragrance and fibre of the character, and that all her looks and actions sprang from and crystallized around her condition. The spectator could not know that she was acting, and art can do no more than to perfect and sustain the illusion which genius creates. That method, had it been absent, would have been missed, but present it was not generally noted. The looks of love,—irradiated with happiness and irresistible in attraction,—with which *Adrienne's* eyes were made to follow the form of her lover linger in memory as among the most beautiful and fortunate expedients of art; but it was the soul behind them which gave them power. Not

since the days of Marie Seebach had any actress shown, as it was shown by Modjeska, in that performance, the union of emotional power,—aroused through the imagination and not the senses,—with intellectual character.

Modjeska's speech was slightly constrained by the fetters of a foreign language, and she painted life with a delicate brush; but she diffused the fire of inspiration, the power of intensity,—always as much more terrible than the power of violence as the silent lightning is more terrible than the crashing thunder,—and she imparted that devastating thrill of passion which, to the big and blaring animals of the human race, is unknown. Love, as depicted by her, was the divine passion that exalts the mind and hallows the object by which it is evoked. As *Adrienne Lecouvreur* she had simply to give form and voice to an experience of that passion. Divested of all the intricacy of the plot,—the dark rooms, cross purposes, back stairways, kitchen gardens, fatal snuff-boxes, and intrigue,—*Adrienne* was depicted as a great woman who greatly loves; who is frenzied by bitter jealousy; who takes an imperial vengeance on her rival; who, thinking herself abandoned, falls into the hell of misery; whose magnanimous soul raises her above her fate; and who dies at last, the victim of hatred and cruelty, just as the clouds are lifting from her life. That experience was perfectly shown by Modjeska. At the first view she attracted, but did not astonish, by elegance and harmony. It was only when,

in the sequence of action, incident begins to affect feeling, and feeling to act upon character, that her powers unfolded themselves and sprang to their victory. She lived in the character. Her voice was sympathetic, and, in the low tones, very sweet. Her face, in repose,—and afterward in the lull of despair which, with a subtle instinct of truth, she once introduced amid her delirium, —was marked by feminine sweetness and tender patience. Her movements, always graceful, were sometimes electrical in their rapidity and long and sinuous reach. Her innate grace,—shown in many ways, and notably in *Adrienne's* delicate, high-bred recoil from her lover's proffered kiss, so deft as scarcely to be seen, —was as sweet as the vanished roses of some remembered June. In sorrow, in frenzy, and in the simulated agonies of the death by poison, she never lapsed out of the refinement of either a gentlewoman or an artist. Her performance of *Adrienne* satisfied every craving for completeness in artistic effort, and it taught how to suffer, how to endure, and how, through the trial of sorrow, to rise toward heaven.

Modjeska's embodiment of *Camille (Marguerite Gauthier)* was not only beautiful in spirit but supreme as a type of apparently spontaneous expression. The poise of the personality was never dropped. Whether by a delicate, wayward wafture of the hand, or a little snap of the thumb and finger, or the flick of a lace handkerchief on the little book of well-preserved

accounts, the artist kept rigidly within her identity, and drew it and tinted it to the very hairline of truth. The acting almost redeemed the subject. To feel a love which ought not to be felt and accept a love which ought not to be accepted is,—always and inevitably,—to prepare the way for bitter misery. From that result,—remorse, self-torture, pain that nothing can cure and that all the success and pleasure on earth can only for a while even alleviate,—there is no escape. That truth, and not another, was taught by Modjeska's *Camille*. There was in the representation an infinite pathos of dumb despair. The misery was such as a fallen angel might feel; the utterance of it such as only the gentlest of women and the most consummate of dramatic artists could achieve. Modjeska was best in the interview with the father, who represents fate, and the parting with the son, who represents love and happiness. She was the absolute image, first of magnificent wretchedness and then of frantic anguish, in the ball-room encounter; and she supplied, in the beatific Death Scene, those elements of pity, consolation, and religious faith which alone can make the acted sacrifice justifiable. The expiation was felt to be then complete, and from that death-bed the awed thought arose into a trembling hope of heaven,—into the comforting belief that sin can at last be washed away and the soul that earth has stained be made white.

If anything could reconcile judgment to the drama

of "Camille,"—which nothing can do,—it would be the embodiment of its heroine, incorrectly and unjustifiably, as she was embodied by Modjeska. She was more like a spirit than a woman; she was the ideal of native purity, lost through passion, but struggling toward the light. I remember a lovely summer night at her home of "Arden," strolling to and fro, with her, through a rose garden, when the great actress, knowing my views of that play, began an elaborate defence of it, based on her performance of its chief part. Very interesting her discourse was,—especially when, in a moment of charming candor, after reviewing the expedients and details of her personation, she remarked, "Of course, it isn't *Camille* at all, but then——," and, perceiving the superfluity of further comment, ceased to speak.

"MAGDA."

The preponderant influence of Modjeska on the time in which she lived was beneficent. The plays to which she gave theatrical illustrations were, mostly, great plays, important in subject and elevating in effect, while those plays produced by her to which objection is rightfully and necessarily made were redeemed, at least in part, by the delicacy and beauty of the woman's spirit which illumined and reinforced the art of the actress and, measurably, transmuted that which is common or base into that which is rare or fine. Her association with the lugubrious Ibsen's paltry play of "A

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

HELENA MODJESKA
as
Camille, in "Camille."

Doll's House" was slight, and it was soon forgotten. The incident of her artistic life which is remembered with regret by those who most admired the artist and who most revere the memory of the woman was her introduction to the American Stage of Hermann Sudermann's radically pernicious play of "Heimat," which, under the name of "Magda," she made known in this country, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on January 29, 1894, and which she was pleased to consider and to designate "a masterpiece of dramatic literature."

The play of "Magda" pertains to the domestic order of drama and it portrays a painful conflict of will between a resolute, rebellious young woman, intolerant of social conventions, and her affectionate but arbitrary father, severe in maintenance of those conventions, at least relative to women, and dictatorially determined to direct the lives of the members of his family. It appears to have been written in a didactic spirit and with much ardor of "moral purpose." In an entirely elemental state of society the declaration that children ought to honor their parents and that parents ought not to treat their children with exasperating and tyrannical severity might possess a salutary significance: in the existing state of society it is a vapid truism, which no amount of pretentious theatrical preachment can make novel or can practically enforce. Yet that truism is the substance of Sudermann's play. The observer is apprised that *Magda,* fretting under the harsh

restraint of her regulative father, has left her home, has been seduced and abandoned, has borne a child, has surmounted difficulties and sorrows, and that she returns to her father's house, to resume her place in his family, to find that her betrayer is the respected friend of her father, and, unwittingly,—albeit in the display of pig-headed perversity, and with a brazen, impudent avowal of incontinence,—to throw her irascible old sire into such a frenzy of horrified rage that he expires from a stroke of apoplexy just in time to prevent him from shooting his daughter with a horse-pistol.

No woman has appeared in recent fiction who affords a more salient example than is presented by *Magda* of almost every repulsive attribute possible to a female character. She is vain, silly, perverse, obstinate, self-willed, unchaste, ugly in temper, and absolutely selfish. Such a character might be serviceable as an incident in a drama, but as the total subject of a drama it is out of all proportion, and it becomes both offensive and tedious. Persons learned in modern dramatic literature, as exemplified in some plays by Ibsen, Sudermann, and others, have kindly intimated, by way of enlightening the crass ignorance of the generality of English-speaking theatre-goers, that the true significance of such plays as "Magda" can be appreciated only by those who are thoroughly familiar with the state of society existent in the countries of Europe in which those plays have

originated. That, possibly, is true. But as, being true, it renders the moral preachments of such plays inappropriate, because inapplicable, to the American community, and as, in general, they are dramatically inept, it would appear also to render the presentment of them on our Stage worse than superfluous. The benign Sudermann may have drawn *Magda* as a Frightful Example, or he may have intended her to be a model of The New Woman: in either case, to a healthful taste, she is unnecessary and obnoxious. It really is not necessary for the Stage to advise young women that they must not regulate the conduct of their lives according to the dictates of vanity and love of admiration; that they ought not to leave their homes and produce children without having been married, and that they ought not, even by a false avowal of wanton propensity or conduct, to cause their paternal progenitors to explode with fury and expire from apoplexy.

There are two classes of persons who make life miserable,—the Regulators and the Inculcators. The Regulators think that they know what is best for all their neighbors, and they are continually meddling with the affairs of others. The Inculcators are heavily freighted with Moral Lessons, and are never weary of the "damnable iteration" of moral platitudes. Hermann Sudermann appears to be a member of the tribe of Inculcators. He has ascertained that there are domestic troubles, and of these he makes pictures, never exer-

cising the discriminative faculty of taste, and, the bars being thus let down, there is no end to the admitted brood of noxious subjects or to the weariness entailed by them. When Dickens was, for the first time, leaving England for the United States, a London satirist inquired whether it was not possible for him to find a sufficient supply of disagreeable persons in the Seven Dials. When the cares, trials, and perplexities of ordinary life are considered, it may well be asked whether it is necessary for the public to repair to the Theatre in order to see such vapid, morbid, repellent women as *Magda,*—and to pay for the privilege!

Much is said in "Magda" about Woman's Freedom. It is highly desirable, no doubt, that Woman should be freed from unjust, arbitrary, needless restraint,—where she happens to be subjected to it,—but there are few observant persons who believe that, everything considered, Woman's mancipatory state is in any degree more strict and harassing than that of her partner, Man. It certainly is impossible to perceive wherein she would improve her condition by assuming license to act in an illicit manner. The conventions of Society, right or wrong (and, manifestly, they are the best that have, thus far, been adopted or suggested), *are* the conventions on which it is conducted, and the sooner the subject of harlotry is dissevered from the demand of Woman for political or social freedom greater than that which she now possesses the sooner her demand is likely

to be satisfied, and the greater will be her good influence on Society.

Helena Modjeska, being imaginative and romantic, readily rose far above the level of *Magda,*—acting the part in a fluently flexible manner and with consummate ease. *Magda,* who in life would be troublesome, disagreeable, and indeed insufferable, became, in the person of that actress, invested with attributes vastly superior to her native endowment, and such as would make her conduct in the play radically impossible,—conspicuous among them being profound sensibility of temperament, charm of manner, beauty of spirit, brilliancy of mind, gentleness, simplicity, grace, and all that is meant by loveliness. The actress made, in print, this statement, relative to *Magda:* "That which appealed to me was not so much the Bohemianism, the plea for woman's rights, as *Magda's* enthusiasm for art, the consciousness of the high mission of an artist," but, unfortunately, she neglected to indicate where, in Sudermann's drama, any "enthusiasm for art" is manifested by *Magda* which rises above the paltry level of personal vanity; and, as to that young woman's "consciousness of the high mission of an artist," she did not explain why such "consciousness" should cause, or should be held to excuse, illicit conduct and contemptuous disregard for decency. That such "consciousness" does not necessarily promote profligate behavior, or anything other than the most exemplary conduct of life, on the part of great women

of the Stage, is abundantly shown by many shining examples, from the time of Sarah Siddons to that of Helena Modjeska and Mary Anderson, and onward to the present day. The rash or vicious conduct of some great players has resulted not from the necessities of artistic life, but from defects of individual character.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

For a woman of Modjeska's exquisite sensibility, refined taste, and fanciful disposition the character and career of Marie Antoinette must have possessed a strong allurement, and it was natural that she should have wished to impersonate that beautiful, wayward, piquant, bewitching, noble, essentially royal woman. It was not, however, till late in her professional life that she produced a drama on the glittering, melancholy story of the hapless Queen. Adelaide Ristori and other performers had made the subject familiar on our Stage, and therefore she was for some time deterred from touching it, but eventually she obtained a liberal variant of Paolo Giacometti's Italian play, on episodes in the reign of King Louis the Sixteenth, and produced it, first in San Francisco, and afterward, March 1, 1900, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York.

The drama was made for her by Clinton Stuart. It begins with portrayal of the light, careless, sportive life of *Marie Antoinette* when resident at Little Trianon, in 1789, her thirty-third year, and ends with a rep-

resentation of her departure from the Prison of the Conciergerie, on her way to the guillotine, in 1793. She was then only thirty-seven. The intermediate scenes exhibit an interview between the *Queen* and *Mirabeau,* in 1791,—the year in which that eloquent orator, wily politician, and gross libertine so suddenly died; the confrontment of the revolutionary mob with *King Louis the Sixteenth* and his *Queen,* at the Tuileries, on the terrible Tenth of August, 1792, when the King and his Consort were compelled to take refuge in the hall of the General Assembly; the parting of the *King* from his wife and family, on the fatal Twenty-first of January, 1793, when he was beheaded; the climax of the discovery of a plot, mentioned but not shown, to effect the escape of the royal children from the Temple, and the brutal separation of the agonized mother,—a deposed and widowed Queen,—from her beloved son. Those scenes are not connected by a thread of story or of continuous, cumulative action, nor is any one of them felicitous in characterization or animated by incident, but the intrepid spirit and imperial demeanor of *Marie Antoinette,* when she is assailed by the angry populace, are well denoted, and the frenzy of the afflicted wife, when her husband has been slaughtered and her son torn from her, is effectively expressed, in a brief speech of passionate invective, closing with an appeal for Divine vengeance. As a prelude to the final picture, that of the execution, with its incidental indignities and

horrors, *Marie Antoinette* is shown asleep, in prison, murmuring, in a dream, of the mingled glories and memories of her darkly troubled career. The best passage in the play, alike for character, invention, and style, is a colloquy between *Marie Antoinette* and *Mirabeau,*— a colloquy reminiscent of Giacometti's drama, but, happily, less prolix.

All the plays on this subject—and they are many—follow, at a long distance, Shakespeare's plan as to *Queen Constance* and *Prince Arthur,* in "King John," and as to *Queen Elizabeth* and her boy *Princes,* in "King Richard III.": this play is not an exception. The appeal of it is made to sympathy with monarchs unjustly degraded, parents despoiled, and a mother cruelly and terribly afflicted, but as this appeal, in this drama as in that of Giacometti (1867), is made by means of tableaux, and not by means of propulsive action in the development of an interesting plot, the effect, necessarily, is pictorial rather than dramatic, and that pictorial effect is sombre and monotonous. An abstract of history can be made instructive, but, intrinsically, it is not dramatic. The play was a failure.

Modjeska, with her rare faculty of imagination to form an ideal, her extensive learning to inform and guide her judgment, and her ample and exquisitely trained power to create and sustain an illusive impersonation, was able to vitalize the historical tableaux which had been provided by the playwright, and in

Marie Antoinette, as in many other parts, she charmed by her sweet womanhood, her dignity, her passionate intensity of feeling, and her touching pathos.

Marie Antoinette was singularly unfortunate in her marriage with a commonplace young man, who should have been a mechanic rather than a prince; in her reckless disregard of the counsels of her wise mother, Maria Theresa; in her lack of discretion, and in her total misapprehension of the social condition and political trend of the time in which she lived. She was blind and helpless in her innocence, seeing no danger and not in the least considering public opinion. It was a deplorable fate which transferred the impulsive Princess, while yet a budding girl, from her happy home in Austria to the corrupt Court of the French Monarchy and the smiling, treacherous surface of enslaved, polluted, incendiary, volcanic France. She enjoyed a brief period of pleasure, but she seems never to have possessed domestic comfort or any compensative tranquillity of regal eminence, and within a few years she passed from glittering girlhood to ravaged, gray-haired age, and then, shattered in nerves, partly blind, prematurely decrepit, heart-broken and desolate, she was butchered to please a foul and hideous Parisian mob.

Modjeska's impersonation of *Marie Antoinette,* while it could not save a lugubrious play, was deeply impressive, and especially it prompted solemn thought relative to the guidance that the Present can derive

from the experience of the Past. It was replete with knowledge of human nature, the loveliness of hope and joy, and the dense gloom and wistful patience of sorrow, and it was saturated with melancholy beauty. It was a perfect image of virtuous womanhood and of imperial dignity, supreme in affliction, and of inexorable grief endured with fortitude. There was in it a power of impartment of heroic strength, a conveyance, to the appreciative observer, of that noble, however sad, philosophy of endurance which lightens the burden of disappointment, bereavement, and sorrow which humanity is ordained to bear, remembering with what grandeur of patience and resignation they have been borne.

"MARY STUART."

Modjeska's performance of *Queen Mary Stuart,* first given in London, at the Court Theatre, October 9, 1880, was made known to the New York public, at the old Star Theatre, on January 5, 1886. The version used by her was made by Lewis Wingfield, on the basis of two translations of Schiller's "Maria Stuart,"—one by J. Mellish, the other by Fanny Kemble. "Marie Stuart" was first made known in America by Rachel, in 1855. The drama served as an excellent medium of expression for Modjeska. It is not so much a play as it is a series of pseudo-historical pictures. Idolaters of the memory of Scotland's unfortunate Queen usually derive much satisfaction from contemplation of every

incident of her dramatic resuscitation. Other observers, if astute, content themselves with the spirited encounter of *Elizabeth* and *Mary,* in the Woodland Scene, and with the pathetic scene of the Execution. Those passages amply display the nature of the transfigured, dramatized *Queen of Scots,* her royal dignity, her devout resignation, and her womanlike tenderness. Those qualities, in order that they may have due effect through the medium of dramatic art, must be enshrined in beauty of person, and must be expressed with that exquisite charm which is the conquering power of genius. Modjeska's performance as *Mary Stuart* was a noble achievement, because of a clearly defined, beautiful ideal, symmetrical, affecting execution, and sustained continuity of assumed character. Her bearing, throughout the colloquy between the rival queens, was superb with magnificent royalty, and in the instant of *Mary's* outbreak of scorn, when she denounces *Elizabeth* as a bastard, Modjeska liberated an electrical burst of passionate feeling. The pathos of her farewell, in the Execution Scene, was irresistibly affecting.

SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS.

The first Shakespearean character acted by Modjeska in America was *Ophelia,*—in which she appeared, to the *Hamlet* of John McCullough, in San Francisco, soon after her advent there as *Adrienne.* The last was *Hermione,* which she acted two or three times, in Los

Angeles, about 1905 or '06, in consequence of our conversation about it. Those performances of *Hermione* were merely experimental,—practically, no more than rehearsals before friends; her work had been done. The last Shakespearean part she can be said really to have added to her repertory was *Cleopatra,* which she impersonated in Chicago and in other cities of America during the theatrical season of 1898-'99. In the interval between the first and last venture in Shakespeare she had also acted, in English, *Juliet, Rosalind, Viola, Imogen, Julia, Beatrice, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, Queen Katharine, Queen Constance,* and *Isabella.*

Her first appearance as *Juliet,* in English, was made during the short tour in California which followed her American début in 1877. On October 12, 1878, she appeared in that part at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, and she retained it in her repertory for the next ten years. Her *Juliet* was remarkable for the winning loveliness of womanhood which it revealed, the deep feeling infused throughout every scene, the illuminative by-play,—as for example, during the scene in which the *Friar* explains his scheme for *Juliet's* escape from marriage with *Paris,*—and for many excellent expedients of stage business. Among those expedients I recall, as special felicities, the partly real, partly affected, hysterical grief with which *Juliet* was made to conclude the wheedling of the offended *Nurse;* a subtle, significant resort to the dagger, at "Vile earth to earth

resign"; the subsequent discarding of that weapon, and the dramatic resumption of it at "Myself have power to die"; the hurried manner in which *Juliet* was made to throw herself upon her couch, at the approach of *Lady Capulet,* and the passionate vehemence and hysterical horror with which she cowered and crouched in a great chair, at the thought of *Tybalt's* ghost. The chief merit of the performance was, consistently, the artistic execution. The correct ideal of *Juliet* was, indeed, admirably suggested, but it was not embodied.

There is no difficulty in comprehending the character: it is one of the simplest of Shakespeare's conceptions. The difficulty is to convey it. This arises from the fact that the part, while it exacts from its representative the perfection of youthful loveliness, demands likewise the perfectly adequate utterance of great and various emotion. The passion of *Juliet* is so vital and deep that, whether possible or not, in actual life, to a young girl, only an actress of much experience and native power is able to express it; and the actress of much experience and power generally proves to be unsuited for the part by the very maturity which has qualified her to act it. That was the case with Modjeska. She instructed the auditor as to the character, spirit, and experience of *Juliet,* and as to the manner in which they should be crystallized into a symmetrical, sympathetic personality; but even when she first played the part in America she was seen to have outgrown it.

Modjeska's first venture as *Rosalind,* in the American metropolis, was made December 11, 1882, at Booth's Theatre, and seven days later she essayed, for the first time there, *Viola.* Modjeska, in those days, was slender and lithe, animated by incessant, tremulous nervous force, but neither then nor at any time was she a dashing, impetuous person, affluent with animal vigor. Her *Rosalind* impressed as an image of tender, tranquil beauty, tempered by archness. It was deficient in the sense of exultant, open-air freedom and in exuberant physical life, while it was replete with the sentiment, the joy, and, above all, the mind of that delightful creature.

Modjeska was the first actress of the part since the days of Charlotte Cushman to make the woman markedly inexperienced in acting the man, and the deep heart of *Rosalind* was beautifully signified by her in all the serious moments in the progress of the action. Her reception of the news of *Orlando's* presence in the Forest of Arden was delightful, by reason of her blended ardor, ectsasy, and shamefaced confusion, and her first interview with him there was surcharged with delicious mischievous archness and delicately passionate delight in his presence. There was, however, an air of maturity, of an almost maternal solicitude, in *Rosalind's* first scene with *Orlando,* and there was cold constraint in the ensuing scene with *Celia.* The total effect of the assumption, because deficient of bold color, richness,

and ever-increasing vigor and happiness, was disappointing: a subdued twilight tone pervaded it, lovely in itself and lovely to remember, but not the tone of Shakespeare's *Rosalind.*

Viola is the most tender and charming of all Shakespeare's women, except *Imogen.* She is not powerful and intense; she loves and she suffers, but she is bright, gentle, and patient; she typifies neither misery nor passion. Shakespeare's changes from verse into prose are always significant and always are made to serve a purpose in acting, and therefore it is significant that he seldom allows *Viola* to speak anything but the language of poetry. The character is slighter than that of *Rosalind,* alike in will and mind, but it is equally affectionate and it is more lovely. The chief point in acting *Viola* is the revelation of wistful sadness under the surface of innocent glee, the half-checked tear that is momentarily visible through the guileless, patient, unselfish, eager smile of childlike happiness. Modjeska's performance of the part was so finical in execution and so indefinite in ideal as to render her effort abortive and at times painful. Her slender, graceful figure, her pensive, spiritual countenance, her sympathetic voice, her air of soft bewilderment, and her handsome dress, as a page, combined to make it a charming image of feminine grace and sweetness, but the person whom she presented might have been called by any name as fitly as by that of *Viola.*

In temperament and method, notwithstanding force of character and vigor of mind, Modjeska was better fitted for the gentle heroines of Shakespeare than for those of formidable nature and executive faculty. Late in her professional career she acted *Constance* and *Cleopatra,* giving performances that, while finely intelligent and artistically finished, were deficient in passion and power. Her use of pathos, however, was exceptionally expert, and as *Constance,* and again as *Queen Katharine,* she gave a moving expression to sorrow. In parts which are, technically, denominated "heavy" she lacked weight; she was delicate, almost fragile; a sweet and lovely woman. As *Lady Macbeth* she was excellent only in the Sleep-walking Scene, her ideal of that character having been accordant to that which Sarah Siddons set forth in print—but never in practice. She gave a charming embodiment of *Desdemona,* and she was a fascinating image of noble womanhood as *Portia.* With the latter part her temperamental affinity was close: she was piquant in the expression of raillery and singularly felicitous in evincement of love: next to Ellen Terry,—an actress incomparable in that character,—she was the most gracious, gentle, lovable *Portia* that has been seen in our time. Her assumption of *Ophelia* allured by its simplicity, but her ideal of the part was peculiar and, to some extent, erroneous: she made the meek, yielding, girlish "Rose of May" a mature and passionate woman,—for which construction

there is no warrant in Shakespeare's text. Her acting of the Mad Scene was notably impressive: the characteristic indications of lunacy and the denotements therein blended of mental distress were conveyed in such a way as to cause a complete illusion, harrowing the mind and afflicting the heart. But her Mad Scene was inconsequent on the earlier scenes. It is singular that *Ophelia* should not have been entirely one of her finest personations,—but it was not.

The grim and painful play of "Measure for Measure," powerful, pathetic, and wonderfully eloquent though it is, and abounding in knowledge of human nature, is one that might well be spared from the Stage. Its treatment of a dark subject is superb. Its language is frequently magnificent. Its discriminative delineations of character are transcendently able and true. It is peculiarly felicitous in its searching inspection of the human heart and its truthful exposition of the motives of human conduct. It is remarkable for the wisdom, stern yet lofty and merciful, with which it depicts human infirmity and at the same time relentlessly enforces the duty of its subjugation. In contrast with the numerous disreputable dramas which, within recent years, have trifled with the theme of carnal propensity, it towers into grandeur. Its effect when represented has, however, always been gloomy and depressing, and if acquaintance is to be made with it at all, it is better to be read than to be seen, for it is unfit for the modern Theatre.

Modjeska produced it and impersonated *Isabella*,—giving perhaps the most powerful of her Shakespearean performances. The womanhood of *Isabella* cannot be expressed by mere simulation. The character is one that, in a special sense, exacts the authoritative, final force of intrinsic nobility. The soul of *Isabella* cannot be assumed with the garments. Modjeska identified herself with the part and was adequate to it in every particular,—in daintiness of person, natural dignity of demeanor, sad beauty of visage, melting tenderness of voice, and, above all, in the tremulous sensibility and passionate ardor of intrinsic goodness. In execution her performance lacked the aspect and vigor of youth, and occasionally it lacked clarity of articulation, but in ideal, —an ideal that comprised nobility, sanctity, ecstatic devotion, and involuntary feminine allurement,—it was perfect. It would not perhaps be saying too much to say that *Isabella* was the finest of all her many impersonations. It revealed in a clear light the lovely sincerity of her spirit and the beauty of her felicitous art, and it went far toward redeeming all that is repulsive in the play.

ACTORS AND ACTING.

Modjeska, being a foreign actor, although she acquired the English language and had a considerable part of her career on the English-speaking Stage, naturally dissented from the doctrine,—certainly a cor-

rect one,—that actors of the Anglo-Saxon race are the best actors in the best drama of that race. Her acting and her published remarks on the subject, however, served only to emphasize the truth of that doctrine. There is neither unkindness nor disparagement in the assertion that actors of the English race excel in the acting of Shakespeare. In foreign performances of Shakespearean parts, however satisfactory they may be to foreign audiences, there is, almost invariably, a discordant element, which, whether it be defined or not, is felt by the generality of English-speaking auditors. This fact in no way lessens admiration for the ability sometimes manifested by foreign executants. In most of Modjeska's Shakespearean performances her cadences of elocution, her mispronunciation of English words, and her foreign accent somewhat marred the beauty of the verse and impaired its meaning. In those performances, furthermore, there was an occasional element of artificiality, arising from imperfect understanding, or, perhaps, a racial discordance between the ideal of the actor and that of the author. It is possible to be a great actor without possessing an absolutely true ideal of the parts assumed: greatness, in spite of that limitation, has repeatedly been displayed by foreign actors in translated and adapted plays of Shakespeare,—for example, by Dawison, Salvini, and Rossi. Meanwhile it is a fact, which all the protests made by foreign actors and their over-zealous advocates cannot obscure, that the

greatest actors are those who, illustrating a true ideal of Shakespeare's great characters, do so with perfect interpretative art; and the actors in whom that union of ideal and execution has been manifested at the best have been and are actors of Shakespeare's race.

Writing on this subject Modjeska declared:

"We foreigners, born outside the magic pale of the Anglo-Saxon race, place Shakespeare on a much higher pedestal. We claim that before being English he was human, and that his creations are not bound either by local or ethnological limits, but belong to humanity. . . . Our argument is that when Shakespeare wanted to present English people he located them in England, or at least gave them English names (*Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, etc.); while, when he presents Romans, Greeks, Jews, Italians, or Moors, he does not mean them to be travestied Anglo-Saxons, but to have characteristics of their own race and nation. . . . It is the fire of African blood that runs through the veins of *Desdemona's* lover, it is the cruelty inborn in his race, that prompts him to murder. . . . The feelings and passions typified in Shakespeare's plays animate all humanity, and this is the reason why the bard of Avon is equally understood, admired, and loved all the world over, or at least where Christian civilization has penetrated."

That summarizes the Polish actress's views on the subject, and it provides an average specimen of the loose thinking and loose expression in which sympathetic arguments are customarily made.

No other single cause has created more error relative to the works of Shakespeare and his rank as a poet and a dramatist than the foolish attribution to him of

invariable perfection and an absolute superiority to all the laws and limitations of humanity. It is not true that all foreigners "place Shakespeare on a much higher pedestal" than do the judicious thinkers of his own race. Modjeska's estimate of the poet, doubtless, was exalted. Voltaire thought him "a barbarian." In France, to-day, on the occasion of a French performance of "Hamlet," Frenchmen speak not of the "Hamlet" of Shakespeare, but of "the 'Hamlet' of MM. Morand and Schwab." The fact that the feelings and passions represented in Shakespeare's plays are universal, not racial, is so patent that (especially as it has never been denied) it hardly requires to be asserted. No one wishes that the dramatist's characters which are located in foreign lands should be displayed as "travestied Anglo-Saxons." What Shakespeare may, or may not, have "wanted" (consideration of which opens a vast field for surmise and speculation) is of little importance compared with what he did. It is beyond reasonable dispute that, whatever more or less superficial traits of foreign mentality his characters display (and it should be remembered that Shakespeare built almost all his plays on a basis of works by others writers), the essential nature which, in them, undergoes an experience of passions and feelings that are of universal applicability is English. Consider *Prospero,* for example, or *Hamlet,* or *Macbeth,* or,—since Modjeska especially cites him,—*Othello.* To Modjeska's mind it was his

"African blood" and "the *cruelty inborn* in his race that prompt him to murder"—not the motives so clearly shown in Shakespeare's text! Could there be more decisive evidence of her misconception of Shakespeare's ideal? A logical conclusion from her premise would be that wife-murder resultant on belief in a wife's infidelity is restricted to persons of "African blood," a conclusion which knowledge rejects. What folly it is to ascribe "cruelty" to *Othello!—Othello,* the magnanimous, the gentle, the kind; *Othello,* of "the free and open nature," the greatest lover in all literature, the man who, even in the moment of sacrificial slaughter, "would not have thee linger in thy pain"! Of all the characters in Shakespeare which are called by foreign names no one—unless, perhaps, it be *Hamlet,*—more unmistakably displays than *Othello* does, under a foreign nomenclature, dominant characteristics of the Englishman,—his self-restraint, habitual calm, slowness to anger, reverent, even idolatrous, feeling toward his wife (a feeling entirely lacking in the race to which he is assigned), and the terrific power of his passion when, at last, that majestic "slow" man (as Kemble called him) yields to it.

In concluding her comments on this subject Modjeska wrote:

"If the plays are rendered in foreign idioms, even the best translations cannot exactly reproduce the beauty and force of the original, and hence a great deal of the poetic charm is lost. If

the plays are rendered in English by foreign-born actors, their lack of familiarity with the acquired language may make their pronunciation defective, and thus imperil, if not the poetry of the sentence, at least the music of the verse."

"Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop," says *Sir Anthony Absolute,* "you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question." Since no translation can "exactly reproduce the beauty and force of the original" it might be thought obvious that the exact atmosphere, meaning, and power of the original cannot be translated. Since foreign actors undertaking to act in English, who *"lack familiarity* with the acquired language," necessarily cannot fully *comprehend* the plays as written it might be thought obvious that they cannot very adequately *interpret* them. In fact, regarding the contention that actors of the Anglo-Saxon race are, at least for auditors of that race, the best of all actors in the plays of Shakespeare, it seems pertinent to add, slightly paraphrasing words of the Bard himself, "It is *proved* already and it will go near to be *thought* so, shortly."

Modjeska, though at first she refused to act in "Camille," because perceptive of the bad influence radiant from it, sometimes resented, as much as a spirit so gentle and amiable could resent, the adverse criticism elicted by that play and by the play of "Magda," and also she was displeased at objection to the powerful but obnoxious drama of "Measure for Measure." Dis-

approval of such criticism was at one time, February, 1898, made known by her, in a public manner, accompanied by intimation that she supposed the writers of it were desirous that the Theatre should be conducted as "a kintergarten." That position had often been taken, and it still is assumed, by defenders of objectionable plays. It is about as rational as to maintain that persons who should protest against the odious writings of Aphra Behn would thereby indicate a desire for such mawkish twaddle as "Sanford and Merton" or "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." Comment on the subject was made by me, at the time of Modjeska's protest, in the following words, which may well serve to close this commentary:

It is the opinion of Mme. Modjeska, expressed in her address before the Twelfth Night Club, that "the Theatre should not be conducted as if it were a kintergarten," and doubtless all thoughtful persons will agree with the eminent actress, in that judgment. No one, as far as known, wishes that the Theatre should be conducted as a "kintergarten," and no effort to conduct it in that way is now visible. On the contrary, the "advanced" view of the Stage is so far prevalent at this time that one of the New York theatres is devoted to the exposition of criminal outrage, and another to the display of attempted strangulation of an adulterous concubine—both of those spectacles being viewed with apparent satisfaction by considerable audiences, composed largely of women, and neither of them being in the nature of such lessons as are commonly taught in the "kintergarten." The need of warning against a theatrical kintergarten, accordingly, is not at once obvious.

It seems just possible, however, that Mme. Modjeska suspects a preference for "kintergarten" methods as underlying the objec-

tion sometimes made to the "advanced" drama, and even to such plays as "Camille" and "Magda," which are included in her repertory. If so, it can only be said that the suspicion is unfounded. Objection to those plays may be mistaken (though it is impossible to see why), but at least it is sincere, and it is based on "grounds more relative" than a liking for Mother Goose and mud pies; on the ground, namely, that those plays and their kindred are coarse and sophistical, and that, by dissipating refinement and confusing moral perceptions, by despoiling delicacy and by injuring taste, they produce a distinctly pernicious effect upon Society and the Stage. Mme. Modjeska, doubtless, is unaware of this effect. Much is pardoned to genius and beauty, and the experience of that great actress—who has given pleasure to thousands of persons—is exceptional and is well calculated to blind her to the truth. But nevertheless it remains true that the production of such tainted plays as "Camille," "Magda," "Mrs. Tanqueray," "Michael's Lost Angel," and "The Tree of Knowledge" has, within the last few years, while rearing and fostering an audience of cads and vulgarians of both sexes, largely alienated the better classes of the people and driven them from the Theatre.

No man or woman of sense and refinement wishes to attend a specious theatrical discussion of such subjects as are raised in plays of that order. They are offensive questions—as obnoxious in a theatre as a conversation about loathsome diseases would be at a dinner table—and the obtrusion of them, far from being salutary, is actively injurious and a gross impertinence. Well-bred persons do not attend the Theatre for the purpose of obtaining information as to the matrimonial adventures of pimps and harlots. The Ten Commandments are well known. Actors are not expected to furnish "lessons." The province of the Stage is Art, and the handmaidens of Art are Beauty and Romance. If that be a "kintergarten" doctrine, then by all means let us have the "kintergarten!" At least it could be visited without risk of nausea at the ribaldry of an insensate libertine or the woes of a sentimental drab.

XXX.

BENOIT-CONSTANT COQUELIN.

1841—1909.

Benoit-Constant Coquelin, born at Boulogne, January 23, 1841, died at Paris, January 27, 1909. In boyhood he was apprenticed to the trade of his father, that of baker. Early in youth he manifested dramatic propensity and talent, and means were provided of promoting his ambition to become an actor. He was admitted to the Conservatoire, in Paris, on December 29, 1859, and he enjoyed the advantage of tuition under Régnier. When nineteen years old he obtained (July, 1860) the second prize at that school, for merit in comedy. In the same year he became a member of the Théâtre Français company, making his first appearance there, on December 7, 1860, as *Gros-René,* in "Dépit Amoureux,"—"The Love Tiff." On December 30, 1863, he was elected "sociétaire" of the Comédie Française. During the next twenty-three years he remained in the service of the national theatre of France, acting many parts, winning extensive popularity, and becoming more and more proficient in his profession and famous in the esteem of his country-

men. He then decided, as his conspicuous associate Sarah Bernhardt had done, to break away from the Comédie and to pursue an independent course, which he expected to find at once more agreeable and more remunerative. In 1888, having formed a dramatic company in association with Jane Hading, he came to America, making his first appearance in New York, October 8 of that year, at Palmer's Theatre (then first opened as such: it had been Wallack's), as *Mascarille,* in "Les Précieuses Ridicules," and as *Noël,* in "La Joie Fait Peur." He was welcomed with enthusiasm. His acting of *Mascarille* was excellent, and in that character, as well as in *Noël,* he evinced the complete mastery of technical method, the consummate knowledge of the machinery of his profession, for which, at all times, he was distinguished. Jane Hading did not appear that night, except as a spectator of her associate's success, but on October 9 she was happily disclosed, as *Claire de Beaulieu,* in "Le Maître des Forges" ("The Ironmaster"), in which part she charmed the public by her winning personality and made a delightful impression, only deepened by the several performances she subsequently gave. The engagement lasted three weeks, ending on October 27, and the Coquelin company then proceeded on a tour of American cities, lasting till the spring of 1889, when it returned to France.

On reaching Paris,—dissension with the Comédie

Française for a time remaining unassuaged,—Coquelin acted at the Porte Saint-Martin, but presently he returned to the Française, and there he continued to act for about three years. He then once more left the Comédie, another visit to America having been arranged for him, and in January, 1894, he acted in New York, appearing in association with Jane Hading and a selected company at Abbey's Theatre (now, 1912, called the Knickerbocker), where he was well received, though not with the exceptional enthusiasm that had attended his original advent here. His reappearance in Paris, after that professional tour had ended, was signalized by a lawsuit, and ultimately he was commanded to pay a fine, to rejoin the Théâtre Français, and to forfeit 100,000 francs if he did not do so before September 1, 1889. He did not do so. At the Porte Saint-Martin, in October, 1899, he acted *Chicot,* in "La Dame de Monsoreau," and in the following December he attempted *Jean Valjean,* in a drama based on Victor Hugo's famous novel, "Les Misérables."

Coquelin wrote and published several treatises relative to the Theatre, among them being "L'Art et le Comédien," "Molière et le Misanthrope," "Un Poéte-Philosophe, Sully Prudhomme," "Les Comédiens, par un Comédien," "L'Arnolphe de Molière," and, in collaboration with his brother, "L'Art de Dire Monologue." At one time he had the bad taste to write and publish a criticism referring, by name, to his distinguished con-

temporary, Henry Irving. His dissertation began with the doctrine that an actor should always merge his individuality in the character, and ended with the precept that an actor's individuality should never be merged. Irving, in a restrained, temperate, effective article, replied, and completely discomfited his adversary.

The strong personality possessed by Coquelin,—for he was one of the most self-assertive and complacent of men,—combined with positive talents and great industry, made him a prominent figure on the European Stage, and his death was the extinction of a fine intelligence, a restless spirit, and a conspicuous celebrity. He was not a man of genius, and he did not exert a great influence on the Stage. He played many parts, and in some of them he was admirable for his fidelity to the surfaces of nature and for the exceeding skill of his executive art, but he lacked imagination, poetry, and power, and especially he lacked distinction. His artistic personality was bourgeois. Within his limit he was an excellent actor, but his limit was narrow. His most popular performance was that of *Cyrano de Bergerac,* first given in Paris in 1897, and made known in America when, in the season of 1900-'01, he made his last visit to this country,—appearing in association with Sarah Bernhardt. In the course of that season he acted *Flambeau,* in "L'Aiglon"; *Scarpia,* in "La Tosca"; the elder *Duval,* in "La Dame aux Camélias"; and the *First Gravedigger,* in the desecration of "Hamlet" which then

was inflicted on this community. His performance of *Cyrano* was a good one,—such as any talented and trained "old stager" could give, and, indeed, such as several "old stagers" did give, when Rostand's play reached the American Theatre in an English form. In imagination, poetic and romantic spirit, and pathos it was vastly inferior to the personation given by Richard Mansfield (October 1, 1898). As *Don Cæsar de Bazan* Coquelin was commonplace, and as *Mathias,* in "Le Juif Polonais" ("The Bells"), he was prosy, common, and, at some points, ridiculous. He was best in low comedy. His *Mascarille* was a gem of that kind, and it could not have been excelled. The strongest serious impersonation he ever gave in America was that of *Scarpia,* in "La Tosca," in which part he was the incarnation of luxurious, vulpine sensuality, combined with merciless, heartless, sarcastic, reptile cruelty. He played *Scarpia* so well that when *Tosca* inserted the carving knife into his gizzard the public heart experienced intense gratification.

Coquelin's most intellectual impersonation was that of *Tartuffe,* a fact which seems to indicate how little he contributed to the treasures of the Stage. The excellence of "Tartuffe" consists in its contrasts of character, its pictorial fidelity to life, its felicities of dialogue, and its scathing rebuke of sanctimonious hypocrisy. *Tartuffe* is the meanest and most loathsome of impostors, the licentious scoundrel who conceals a depraved

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

BENOIT-CONSTANT COQUELIN
as
Mascarille, in "Les Précieuses Ridicules."

heart and a life of sensual indulgence beneath the mask of religious zeal and moral self-abnegation. Many variations of that type of man—such, for example, as *Maworm, Dr. Cantwell, Aminidab Sleek,* and *Joseph Surface*—have been displayed, during many years, on the English-speaking Stage. The most elaborately drawn and most brilliant hypocrite of all is *Joseph Surface,*—just as "The School for Scandal" is the most powerful, sparkling, and trenchant play, on the subject of moral imposture, that has been written, not excepting Ben Jonson's "Volpone."

Molière's comedy is somewhat deficient in interest of plot and in the element of action. The first two acts are devoted to a description of circumstances, the posing of the characters, and the work of preparation. *Tartuffe* does not enter till Act Third. In that act he makes a licentious proposal to the wife of the friend in whose home he has established himself, and being repulsed and in danger of exposure, contrives to blind that friend by an adroit assumption of fault, repentance, and humility. In Act Fourth he is exposed by the wife, who leads him to avow his base passion, in the hearing of her husband, concealed under a table. Then he assumes his real character, that of a cruel and relentless villain, and he is prevented only by the intervention of royal authority from ruining the man who has clothed and fed him. There are two effective scenes in the piece, which culminates with the exposure of

Tartuffe—development of character, not of plot, being the purpose of the comedy. *Tartuffe* can be acted in at least two ways. The author appears to have conceived him as a plump, florid, sleek individual, with a fluent delivery and a bland and specious demeanor of affected mildness. Such persons, in actual life, are usually made known to the close observer by the eye, which is hard and bold in expression, fat and watery, crafty when aware of being observed, and horribly carnal and cruel when under the influence of stimulant. An assumption of oily good humor is sometimes seen in that type of villain, but he is generally grave, polished, and insidious. The latter image of him is the one usually presented on the stage, and probably it is the one Molière intended in *Tartuffe*,—because the more dramatic one.

Coquelin presented a suave, easy-going, specious rascal, self-indulgent and genial except at moments of peril and of defensive pugnacity. His vein was more that of *Aminidab Sleek* than that of *Joseph Surface*. Simple animal appetite rather than calculating sentimental luxury was asserted as a predominant motive, and the effect of hateful wickedness was thus subordinated to that of physical bulk and a curiously humorous inertia. A subtle drollery seemed just beneath the surface, and where that was absent the coloring was dull. Coquelin assumed gravity, but it was heavy rather than imposing. The affectation of contrition, at the end of Act Third, was a stroke of nature, made with fine art.

There was some excitement but not an attractive or plausible amatory ardor in *Tartuffe's* declaration to the wife; there was only an exultant sense of desire and of the good fortune of possessing a priestly robe for the convenient concealment of sin. More than once, indeed, the villain seemed to be laughing at himself and taking his depravity and the trouble occasioned by it as a jest. The embodiment was framed, fashioned, and illumined with ripe mimetic skill—but there is more than swinish animalism in *Tartuffe*. The personation of him ought to shock by rapacious lust, hateful malice, and a subtle, grisly spirit of crafty, wicked intellect, as well as to amuse by surface traits of humorous hypocrisy and comic cynicism. The justification for the revival of such a play as "Tartuffe" is that its hideous central figure should be so truthfully and well presented as to be made loathsome and odious. It is not so important that the audience should be amused by an almost droll impostor as that it should be made to detest a vile and impious wretch. The actor's artistic method of making sport was often superb—as when the priest tells the lady not to trouble about "Heaven." A man may display great talent in acting, even when he does the dubious thing, but to do the precisely right thing and do it superbly is the best success.

Coquelin's tendency in the dramatic art was toward broadly comic aspects of human nature, grotesque attributes of character, and the absurdities of experience,

and those phases of life he often depicted with admirable fidelity. Behind the question of technical proficiency there is always the question of individual superiority, of what can, perhaps, rightly be called artistic beneficence,—the question whether the actor has been supremely endowed by nature and is, for that reason, of extraordinary importance to the community. Coquelin did not captivate either by intrinsic charm or acquired grace. In the atmosphere of poetry, as was clearly shown by his *Don Cæsar,* he was a stranger. He played the romantic *Don* in the vein of low comedy. If that be the correct view of the part, then his personation should be ranked as admirable,—for it was entirely droll, never aristocratic, never noble, never refined, never instinct with innate superiority.

Among Coquelin's most characteristic personations were *Hannibal,* in Émile Augier's "L'Aventurière" (the French original on which Robertson founded his comedy of "Home"), and *Henri Duval,* in "Les Surprises de Divorce" (the French original on which Daly founded "The Lottery of Love"). "L'Aventurière" is painfully true to life in its presentation of the hard case of a woman who, having sinned against her better self, and soiled and degraded her soul, wishes to become chaste and virtuous, and learns the bitter truth that persons who sin or blunder in the conduct of life must bear the consequences of their deeds. The story shows that a gentleman, who is a widower, aged sixty, having two

children, has fallen in love with a woman who has been a courtesan, and who intends to marry him for the sake of his wealth and because she is wishful to lead a decent life. The woman, *Clorinda,* an adventuress, is attended by her brother, a blustering, cynical, impudent blackguard, at once swindler, roisterer, bully, sot, and duellist. The old gentleman's son, a man of the world, returning home after a long absence and an estrangement from his father, comes between him and the adventuress, attracts her, and saves his father from the disaster of a marriage with her. "L'Aventurière" was produced at Palmer's Theatre, on October 10, 1888—Coquelin appearing as *Hannibal,* the blackguard brother, and the accomplished Jane Hading acting *Clorinda.*

Clorinda is an easy part to understand and for a clever actress an easy part to play. Mme. Hading looked it perfectly, and her blandishments, as exercised upon the elderly dupe, would have made a sore-headed old bear disclose the hiding-place of his honey. There is a moment of passionate revulsion and bitter scorn for *Clorinda,* after she has sought the sympathy of a young girl, *Celia,* and been by her repulsed, and in that moment Mme. Hading evinced deep knowledge of human nature, together with executive dramatic faculty of a high order. Coquelin found in *Hannibal* a character consonant with his peculiar, bustling, self-assertive vein. His appearance was picturesque, his bearing audacious, his identi-

fication with the part thorough, and his authority as an actor,—one perfectly sure of himself, aware of what he wished to do and master of the means by which he wished to do it,—easily dominated every dramatic situation in which the character is displayed. Yet he demonstrated, more than anything else, a singular but undeniable fact, that the capable, efficient, and alert actor can, at the same time, be devoid of thrilling interest. In that respect Coquelin was typical,—for the observer could watch him for hours without any other emotion than that of placid resignation. Nothing could be more perfect, in a mechanical way, than his investiture of his personality with the attributes of *Hannibal.* The detail of his action in the tipsy scene was extraordinary. But the embodiment was all machinery. Mme. Hading did not overwhelm the spectator, but while she was on the scene with Coquelin that actor was scarcely noticed. There was much more elemental power in Mme. Hading than she was able to express, with her limited resources of voice and her peculiar method of ominous self-repression. Her face was indicative of sensibility and passion, her movements were impetuous, her gestures were large and free, she possessed charm, she obviously was acquainted with love and grief, and in *Clorinda* she evinced a closer affinity with the classical ideal in acting than has generally been displayed by French actors who have in recent years performed in America.

The Coquelin-Hading presentation of "Les Surprises

de Divorce" served chiefly to demonstrate how much superior to the original is the play that Augustin Daly derived from it,—a play which preserves all the comic qualities of the French piece, without its vulgarity. At no moment in its representation by the Coquelin-Hading company did the tide of feeling rise higher than it often has done on our Stage in the acting of such pieces as "Slasher and Crasher," "Poor Pillicoddy," and "Forty Winks." The person presented by Coquelin, as *Henri Duval,*—elderly in aspect, commonplace in condition, and roughly jocular in demeanor,—was essentially coarse; not a gentleman, not a person to inspire sympathy or awaken any sort of interest other than is felt in a comic buffoon. The obtrusive absence of refinement almost blinded observation to the comedian's elaborate, consummate execution. Yet, technically, it was one of his best performances. His method of becoming amused, breaking into laughter, sustaining the mood of merriment, and allowing it finally to glide into another and different mood, yet reminiscent of its predecessor,—as happens always in life,—was an example of perfect dexterity. Coquelin's temperament being cold, he could not always simulate the excitement that is essential through perfect concealment of art to make imitation seem reality. On the other hand, he possessed strength of character, force of brain,—notably signified in mental poise and in will,—and he had an affluent fund of droll humor. His self-possession was

extraordinary, showing itself in his repose, deliberate precision, and the scrupulous care with which he elaborated the details of every character.

"CYRANO DE BERGERAC."

"Cyrano de Bergerac" was presented in the Garden Theatre on December 10, 1900, Coquelin acting *Cyrano* and Bernhardt acting *Roxane,* and numerous admirers of that romantic fabric beheld it, and rejoiced over it, in its original form. It is not, dramatically, better in that form than it is in Louis N. Parker's English adaptation, but the literary quality of it,—the occasional felicity of the French verse,—is more obvious. The play is a flamboyant melodrama, ingeniously contrived to illustrate, under exceptional circumstances, an eccentric man's infatuation for a pretty and silly woman, and to provide for the prominent display of a remarkable character. "Cyrano de Bergerac" was first made known on the American Stage on October 3, 1898—Richard Mansfield producing it in New York, and Augustin Daly, on the same date, bringing it out in Philadelphia, with Ada Rehan and Charles Richman in the central parts. Few plays in our time have been as greatly overrated as this one was, when first acted in France and heralded in America. It is not nearly as interesting as "The Count of Monte Cristo," and, dramatically, it is not comparable with "The Duke's Motto."

The French, as actors, achieve their best success in the photographic part of acting. Their transcript of the surface of things is, generally, accurate, and sometimes it is wonderfully effective. They do not often touch the deeps. Their peculiar field is that of manners and intrigue. De Quincey somewhere maintains, and with truth, that the French drama is essentially inferior to the English because it has grown out of a radically lower nature, and he declares that in all the dramatic literature of France there is not one case of the antinomies of passion, where the mind says one thing and the impassioned soul says another. Delsarte long since declared that England, cold, formal, and undemonstrative though its people ordinarily are, had produced the greatest actors that the world ever saw,—for the racial reason that the English nature, commonly careless of the surface of things, rises, under strong impulse, to a tremendous altitude of emotional excitement and expression. In other words, French acting is superb when dealing with trifles, but it generally becomes feeble when confronted with situations of spiritual conflict, tempestuous passion, sublimity, and grandeur, and that is why, with every disposition to admire it, the observer remains cold in its presence. A French *Joseph Surface* is conceivable: a French *Othello* or a French *Macbeth* is a radical impossibility. No better illustration of those truths could be found than was afforded in the art of Constant Coquelin. His excellence as an actor was

obvious; it has been abundantly recognized, clearly defined, and cordially extolled. In him, as in all other actors, the limitations as well as the merits were definite, and his frequent appearance in unsuitable parts emphasized those limitations. His acting evinced neither imagination nor poetic sensibility, and in characters involving pathos, noble passion, tragic power, weird, haunted atmosphere, or romantic condition his personality was seen to be inappropriate, his methods inadequate, and his proceedings became tiresome.

The best interpretation that can be placed on Rostand's ideal of his long-nosed Gascon hero is that he was intended to be the incarnation of tenderness, romantic idolatry, passionate fidelity, and eternally patient sorrow, controlled and hidden beneath an assumed demeanor of blatant pugnacity, jocose humor, and nonchalant indifference. In that way the ideal was apprehended by Richard Mansfield,—an actor who was more remarkable for intellect, irony, wild force, and mordant humor than for either pathos or sweetness,—and Mansfield's performance of it was far more brilliant and interesting and far nobler than that given by Coquelin. Mansfield put his heart into the character, while Coquelin, with almost unmatchable loquacity and a great show of being in earnest, though not above "mugging," evinced an ordinary personality, consummate dexterity, and no more ardor than that of a clam. Nothing could be more elaborate and correct than his

make-up was; no simulation of the aggressive, insolent, combative bully could have been more true. In the opening scenes he was thoroughly competent, but as a lover and a vicarious wooer he was like "Fourthly" in a Scotch sermon. The pitiable incongruity between a repulsive physical aspect and a beatific grand passion was, indeed, made clearly manifest, but surely there should be a richer result than that; surely, when a transparency is to be employed in acting, there should be something visible through it,—the warmth of a deep heart, the splendor of a great mind, the wealth of a noble soul, the nameless, triumphant quality of charm, and not simply the proficiency of trained talent. In his scene with *de Guiche,* under the balcony, the pretender's identity would have been detected by *Roxane* in an instant. In that scene, also, the absurdity of making a woman capitulate because of a long speech of tumid rhetoric became more than ever conspicuous.

Sarah Bernhardt gave an entirely intelligent and conscientious performance of *Roxane,* and that was as much as could rationally be expected of a strong woman constricting herself within the limits of a pygmy doll. There is nothing in *Roxane.* She even lacks the attribute of perception,—one that no woman was ever known to lack,—the instinct to know when a man is in love with her. She is a shallow, capricious, lovely dunce, as bright as an icicle,—and as brittle. So Bernhardt presented her, and with much saccharine sizzle of middle-aged sentiment.

XXXI.

JEAN MOUNET-SULLY.

1841—19—.

HIS ACTING IN SEVERAL CHARACTERS.

The eminent and accomplished French actor Jean Mounet-Sully made one visit to America, coming in 1894, and, though his stay was not long and though his performances exercised little, if any, perceptible influence on the American Stage, his appearance here deserves commemoration as the visit of an exceptional and important representative of foreign dramatic art. The distinguished actor, making his professional advent in this country, appeared, on March 28, 1894, at Abbey's Theatre, New York, and impersonated *Hernani*. The event was important, the occasion deeply interesting. The actor had chosen wisely, for his first American appearance, a character not of tragedy, but of romantic drama, and one well known to his new audience,—the character with which Victor Hugo long ago led a victorious revolutionary assault on the classic style of dramatic literature and art in France. "Hernani" was acted with competent ability in the chief parts, and in a lovely spirit. Mounet-Sully charmed by his picturesque

appearance, and he gave a fluent and flexible embodiment of one of the most romantic lovers that have graced the Stage. He was seen to be easily a master of the art of expression. His countenance denoted rare sensibility, he moved with grace, his demeanor was impetuous and demonstrative, and his rich voice uttered the emotions of an ardent spirit in the language of perfect music. More than any other French actor who had been seen on the American Stage he showed himself to possess the fine and winning quality of personal distinction. Through all the storms and fluctuations of *Hernani's* fevered, wretched experience he bore himself with the sincerity and simplicity which betoken the controlling power of true taste,—so that passion never became effusive nor heroism absurd. The central idea of "Hernani" is idolatry of a woman, an idea that does not appeal, with overwhelming force, to all classes of auditors. When, however, that emotion is to be expressed at all, even the least sympathetic auditor likes to have it expressed well. The representative of *Hernani* commonly is effusive. Mounet-Sully was not, —and by his self-poise he denoted mental balance and artistic discretion. His ardent and various action throughout the vicissitudes of the difficult Third Act,— after *Hernani* has entered in the disguise of the pilgrim,—was especially admirable. He was interesting even in the tedious Tomb Scene (a scene which is heavily burdened by the *King's* prolix oration), and

he was impassioned and sympathetic in the scene of poison and death. The machinery of his artistic method was, at all times, obvious. He used much gesture, and it was large, various, and significant. He was a superb listener, and he filled the scene with expert by-play, always helpful to the total effect, and never immoderate. His best qualities were delicacy of touch and refinement of feeling. The strangeness, the spiritual elevation, appertaining to genius he did not manifest, and there was no sign of inspiration in any part of his embodiment.

Mme. Segond-Weber, a handsome woman and a skilful actress, appeared as *Donna Sol,*—the much-loving and much-beloved heroine, who is compelled to testify, even unto the bitterness of death, her devotion to the old doctrine of "all for love." *Donna Sol,* like *Hernani,* is an idolater, in the period when all life is colored by youth and passion. For both lovers the note is intensity. Mme. Segond-Weber vied with Mounet-Sully in a picturesque and at times vociferous denotement of passion, conflict, and misery. The *King* and the implacable *Don* with the winding horn were effectively embodied. Mme. Segond-Weber made a profound impression by her transit from defiance to supplication, and then to delirium. That actress was of the brunette type, in appearance suggestive of Rachel, in style suggestive of Sarah Bernhardt,—whose singular, powerful, absorbing personality, causing imitation both conscious

and unconscious, has deeply influenced many actresses, English as well as French.

Œdipus has been known on the English Stage for more than two hundred years, but, fortunately, he does not often emerge. The woes of a man who has unwittingly killed his father and then married his mother, and finally torn out his eyes, are agonizing and terrible to such a degree that they cannot be contemplated without intolerable pain. The condition is one of appalling misery, and of misery that is hopeless. As often as *Œdipus* recurs the observer is confronted with the old insoluble problem of evil destiny. Certain persons have been, and certain persons still are, pursued by misfortune and sorrow, from the cradle to the grave. Conduct innocent in its motive may prove criminal in its character and calamitous in its result. Horrible crimes are consummated; evil prevails; the good man suffers; and all ends hideously, in pitiable affliction and the darkness of death. That is the observation of Sophocles, and his comment is that no creature can be deemed happy until he is dead. That corollary may not be sound, but in face of the overwhelming testimony with which history teems it seems rash to deny the Greek poet's assertion. Unmerited misery is not universal, but all over the world there is unmerited misery. Every great writer has seen it and has said it,—Sophocles, in "Œdipus"; Job and the Preacher, in the Bible; Shakespeare, in "King Lear" and "Hamlet"; Goethe, in

"Faust," and many more. It is useless, however, to look continually on the awful truth, and it is worse than useless to assume that it can be comprehended and explained. *Œdipus* is unmitigated horror, colossal anguish, remediless misery. The terrible voice which,—out of darkness and storm,—calls the wretched man, at last, to his secret doom and his mysterious sepulchre might perhaps explain it: human divination has failed.

In the Greek tragedy many of the chief events do not occur in sight but are related, and that, for the purpose of the stage, is bad art. Voltaire and other authors have adapted "Œdipus," blending the two parts, and adding and altering many details, and thus, while they have deformed the play, as a piece of literary art, they have liberated the action contained in it. The version presented by Mounet-Sully, one made by M. Jules Lacroix, proved sufficiently effective, although little more than a translation of the first part of the Greek original. It was presented March 27, 1894, and the eminent French actor gave his impersonation of *Œdipus,* an impersonation which, by many of his countrymen, had been proclaimed to be supremely great. As executive dramatic art it often was superb, but as a fate-driven haunted being, expressive of the conception of the Greek poet, it was insubstantial, because it lacked intrinsic majesty, and it also lacked the illimitable depth and overwhelming reality of colossal woe and the horror of preternatural doom.

Mounet-Sully manifested abundance of physical power, but he did not rise to the high level of the tremendous subject of "Œdipus," either in imagination, mind, spirit, or the capability of suffering. The humanity of his embodiment,—its expression of mortal weakness, in the state of blind and wandering grief,—was its best and most touching attribute. His delivery of the text was musical and he pleased by many picturesque attitudes, and sometimes thrilled by wild rushes and loud laments. He showed himself to be more a romantic actor than a tragedian, but his art was exceedingly interesting. The splendidly trained artist was visible in all that he achieved, and his achievement was essentially brilliant. When a man measures himself by prodigious standards, such as those that are reared by *Œdipus* and *Lear,* he necessarily raises a question which implicates personal individuality more than the art of expression. Agony like that of *Hernani* can be conceived and expressed; the agony of *Prometheus* requires the soul of a Titan. During the first half of the tragedy the dignity was in the attitudes much more than in the mind, and the observer saw *Œdipus* as a man of arrogant disposition, splenetic temper, and violent and explosive speech. Later, when the *King* began to be shaken by vague presentiments, the spiritual condition grew finer, and the actor's conveyance of the vague groping of apprehensive perplexity and half-dismayed solicitude was superlatively fine. Still later, as the monarch's environ-

ment became more ominous, the tragedian gained in grandeur. The scene with *Tiresias* had been one of noise and fury; the scene with the old shepherd was worked up with magnificent passion, and ended with a frenzied exit, of wonderful pictorial effect. The human note at the close was struck with splendid force—the parting with the children and the simple suggestion of miserable isolation from all mankind being the truest and the highest achievement of all. French tragedy, being constructed after the Greek model, is stately and declamatory, and, usually, it can be viewed with composure. Its symmetry, however, and the refinement of style which it compels are often delightful, and when it is animated by a passionate temperament in the actor, as it was in Mounet-Sully's performance of *Œdipus,* it becomes deeply impressive.

Corneille's drama of "The Cid," although a classic in the library, was, for America, a novelty on the stage, and the production of it that was accomplished on April 4, 1894, by Mounet-Sully and his associates was observed with much interest. From the moment of its first production in France, in 1636, "The Cid," as a story, has been a favorite. It was almost immediately transplanted to the English Stage, and although it has fallen into disuse it once enjoyed ample favor, and it is associated with some of the brightest names in the dramatic periods of Betterton and Garrick. The elements of it are simple, and much of its power proceeds

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JEAN MOUNET-SULLY

as

Œdipus, in "Œdipus Rex."

from its simplicity. A taste for Spanish literature had been made fashionable in Corneille's early manhood, and he therefore chose a Spanish subject, and he was faithful in his treatment of it. The adventures of *Roderic Dias de Bivar* reappear in the drama,—his love for *Chimène,* his combat with her father, the death of *Count Gomez de Gormas,* and the marriage ordained by *King Alphonso* being truly set down and artfully made subservient to a fine display of noble character, heart-rending grief, and pictorial dramatic effect. There was no brighter name in the eleventh century than that of Roderic, the model warrior of his age, and his victories over the Moors of Spain are among the most brilliant of recorded achievements in the annals of martial life. The part of *The Cid* was seen to be accordant with Mounet-Sully's artistic vein, being picturesque, passionate, impetuous, abounding in opportunities for sonorous declamation and for the denotement of strong passions in violent conflict. The actor was a noble figure to the eye, and, in particular, his expression of love was marked by that beautiful delicacy, commingling awe and reverence with passionate devotion, which is the signet of truth. A fervent embodiment of *Chimène* was given by Mme. Segond-Weber.

On April 2 Mounet-Sully appeared as *Ruy Blas,* a part to which his person, talents, and style were seen to be exactly suited, and he gave a brilliant manifestation of dramatic power and skill. In the original

French piece *Don Cæsar de Bazan,*—a part commonly omitted from the English adaptation,—is a prominent figure. "Ruy Blas" has held the stage for more than seventy-five years,—its first representation having occurred at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, in Paris, on November 8, 1838, with Frédéric Lemaître as *Ruy Blas,* M. St. Fermin as *Don Cæsar,* and Mme. Louise Beaudoin as the *Queen.* It is in the vein of "Hernani," and is devoted to the glorification of idolatrous love for a woman. That ideal kept its place in Victor Hugo's mind till the last,—for the sailor in his wonderful novel "The Toilers of the Sea" is prompted by the same motive that actuates *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas:* in his later works Hugo was careful to make the idolized lady completely unappreciative of her adorer. Mounet-Sully expressed in the spirit of profound truth the tendency of romantic love to ennoble the person who feels it. In this respect,—the commingling of delicacy with fervor, in a kind of ecstatic transfiguration,—his lover was one of the best that have been seen. His killing of the odious *Don Salluste* was accomplished with splendid celerity and with a superb expression of the preponderant force of an implacable purpose. Mounet-Sully's mechanism in acting was almost always manifest, yet in ebullitions of amatory enthusiasm he created an uncommon illusion of sincerity. The English "Ruy Blas" is better than the French in one way; it is shorter.

XXXII.

CHARLES F. COGHLAN.

1842—1899.

The Stage suffered a signal, calamitous loss in the death of Charles F. Coghlan, who died on November 27, 1899, at Galveston, Texas, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. He was born at Paris, June 11, 1842, and the early part of his life was passed in the French capital, of which he always retained pleasant memories and to which he was deeply attached. He had his career in England and the United States, and if it did not entirely fulfil the extraordinary promise of its dawn it certainly was marked by fine achievement and crowned with honorable fame. Coghlan began as a writer, and to the last he valued himself more as a dramatist than as an actor. Among his best known plays are "Lady Barter," "The Brothers," "Citizen Pierre," and the adaptation, once very popular, of "A Quiet Rubber." His adoption of the stage was caused by the old theatrical manager, J. B. Buckstone, to whom he had offered a play, and who, ignoring the manuscript, not only advised him to appear as an actor but also provided the opportunity for him to do so. He made his first

appearance at the Haymarket Theatre, London, and subsequently acted at different metropolitan and provincial theatres, in various characters, and with ever-increasing success; but it was not until he became associated with the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London, in 1870, that he assumed a position of prominence. With that theatre he was connected for about six years, and there he manifested brilliant ability and acquired valuable reputation. In 1872 he made a conspicuous hit as *Alfred Evelyn,* in "Money," and in 1874 he gave a superb performance of *Charles Surface,* in "The School for Scandal." Those two performances might, indeed, be taken as an index of his quality—for he possessed the intellectual distinction, passionate intensity, bitterness, and force that are requisite for the one, together with the buoyancy and sparkle indispensable to the other; and in both he was natural, graceful, fluent, an aristocrat to the tips of his fingers, and an artist in every action and word. No other actor of our time made *Evelyn* such a flexible character or invested him with such charm. It was as *Evelyn* that Coghlan made his first appearance in America, September 12, 1876, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, under the management of Augustin Daly,—Miss Jeffreys Lewis playing *Clara Douglas,*—and his triumph on that occasion has not been forgotten. Subsequent to that time, during a period of twenty-three years, he was a familiar presence on the American Stage, and to the vanishing generation

of playgoers our Theatre has seemed lonely without him.

While Coghlan was associated with Daly's Theatre he acted, among other parts, *Orlando, Charles Surface, Claude Melnotte, Sir Thomas Clifford,* and the *Duke de Septmonts* in "The American" (Dumas's "L'Étrangère"); and, for his benefit, he played *Hamlet.* He had, while on the English Stage, appeared as *Shylock,* and on the American Stage he appeared, in association with Mrs. Langtry (1890), as *Antony,* in "Antony and Cleopatra," and as *Macbeth.* He was not a tragedian; his distinctive excellence lay in comedy; but he was an actor of much versatility, and this he abundantly demonstrated by his performances in melodrama, when, under the management of A. M. Palmer, he acted at the Union Square Theatre, and when, in many theatres of Great Britain, he embodied, with power and pathos, the character of *Conrad,* the outlaw, in the play of "Civil Death," adapted by himself from the Italian original first made known by Salvini. From that part to *Mercutio* the range is indeed extensive, but it was easily within his control. He had a figure of rare symmetry, a handsome face,—remarkable not only for regularity of features but for variety, dignity, authority, and sweetness of expression,—a voice of wide compass and sympathetic quality, and a natural demeanor of intrinsic superiority.

Coghlan had bought a farm at Fortune Bridge, near Souris, Prince Edward Island, and he was looking

forward to the time when he might be able to withdraw from the stage. His purpose was to pass the closing years of his life in literary retirement. Fate willed it otherwise. His work suddenly ended. He was a man of rare endowments, and in many ways he was fitted for a great career. His frailties were the aberrations of a generous, impulsive mind, too easily dazzled by success and adulation. With more foresight, balance, and persistency he would have accomplished greater things. No actor ever had more wealth of opportunity and no man ever more frankly recognized it. The sceptre was often placed within his reach, but he liked better to caress the roses than to wear the crown. Across the garish scene of life he passed in sunshine and music, to vanish all at once into the silence and the dark. He assumed no leadership, and his influence was as transient as the smiles that followed him; but affectionate memory will long enshrine his image and lament his loss.

The success of Coghlan's first performance in America was decisive: he became popular at once, and he remained so to the end of his career, though his sometimes erratic behavior caused his prosperity to fluctuate. A comedian must possess exceptional charm to carry the part of *Evelyn,* in Bulwer's comedy of "Money." That well-known play is felicitous in plot, character, and dramatic effect, but the language of it is often artificial and *Evelyn* is mordant and grim. Macready, for whom

the part was written and who was the first performer of it (at the Haymarket Theatre, London, December 8, 1840), considered it "ineffective and inferior,"—adding the remark, "I have nothing great or striking in situation, character, humor, or passion to develop." Coghlan made the part sympathetic, by reason of the winning personality that he manifested through the medium of its morbid gloom and bitter cynicism, and also by the fine art by which he made its language flexible. His method was direct and simple. He was intensely earnest, and he impressed by his authority, exceptional grace, and sweet, various, fluent elocution. The victory was signal, for it was gained in the face of formidable obstacles: he had come as a stranger, most of his associates in the cast of "Money" were actors of distinction, old favorites,—such as Charles Fisher, John Brougham, William Davidge, and James Ring,—and his part was one that does but little for the actor who represents it. He nevertheless dominated the entire performance. He uttered the sarcasms of *Evelyn* with the sincerity of absolute conviction, and he suffused the character with romantic and passionate as well as intellectual ardor. The feeling manifested toward the formal heroine, *Clara Douglas,* was not that of the *Romeo* lover,—which, indeed, does not and should not appear in a self-contained nature, carefully framed, as *Evelyn* is, to be at once the product and the rebuke of an artificial, selfish, heartless society,—but it was

well simulated feeling, seeming true and deep, and it wrought a fine effect. The most affecting moments of Coghlan's performance were those of *Evelyn's* intense, suppressed passion, in the Third Act, and those of his eagerness at the sudden inception of the scheme to unmask *Sir John Vesey* and his exultation in the prospect of defeating that arch hypocrite,—the most effective character in the play. In all Coghlan's acting there was a pleasing propriety of art. The thought preceded the speech. The gesture came before the word. All that was said and done seemed to be said and done for the first time. This felicity of impersonation was supreme in his personation of *Evelyn.*

His acting of *Lord Clancarty,* which part he played, April 25, 1889, in association with Mrs. Langtry, was faultless,—pictorial to the eye and delightful to the mind; not a labored imitation of life, but a delicately exaggerated impersonation of character, causing the effect of nature. His vocalism in that performance was exceptionally fine, so that those who listened to him heard our language spoken in modulated tones of singular melody.

"THE ROYAL BOX."

Coghlan gained brilliant success,—in a sort of Indian summer of his professional life, for it came after a long period of chill and comparative obscurity,—by a fine performance in his drama called "The Royal

Box," which he produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, December 21, 1897. That play, though new in form, was based on Alexandre Dumas's old drama, telling a fanciful story about Edmund Kean. The best points of the original are preserved in it, but the incidents are rearranged, and Coghlan provided a new text and changed the nomenclature,—a wise expedient, for it is a safe principle of constructive art that when the incidents of a story are imaginary the persons should also be imagined. The changes thus made, while they did not wholly relieve the dramatic fabric from extravagance, invested it with credibility.

The general effect of Coghlan's play is that of pleasing fluency, suspense, and sharp climax, while the tone is that of commingled realism and romance. *Edmund Kean* becomes *Mr. Clarence,* the actor, and is revealed as the ill-used but magnanimous lover of a married woman who has been infatuated by his acting, and also as the counsellor of stage-struck innocence and the protector of persecuted beauty and virtue. In the First Act the lover resorts to an elaborate and seemingly needless subterfuge in order to declare his passion and make an appointment with its object. In the Second he sarcastically dilates on the hardships and sorrows of the dramatic profession. In the Third he saves a frightened girl from the clutches of a titled scamp, and delivers an impassioned speech, some part of which is rant against the English House of Lords, on the

inequality of the actor and the nobleman. In the Fourth and Fifth, which are neat in construction and finely dramatic, he depicts the man of genius inflamed by amatory passion and torn by jealousy, at first pleading with his royal rival and afterward openly insulting and defying him. At a point in the representation of this play one of the boxes in the auditorium is used as an adjunct to the stage. That, the Royal Box, is occupied by the *Prince of Wales,* the lady of *Clarence's* love and the lady's husband, in the capacity of spectators of the performance in which *Clarence* is then acting. *Clarence* is impersonating *Romeo,* in the Balcony Scene, with *Juliet.* The *Prince* is assiduous in his attention to the lady in the Royal Box, and *Clarence,* hating him as a rival and detesting him as a profligate, becomes frenzied, lapses out of *Romeo,* launches a torrent of almost incoherent invective on his royal adversary, and collapses in a paroxysm of emotion. At last he adroitly saves the woman's reputation at the sacrifice of his heart.

The infirmity of the piece is a distortion of view as to the mysterious attribute of Genius. Upon that subject there has always been diversity of opinion. In the minds of some observers genius, as in the case of Shakespeare, is perfect sanity,—the equilibrium of all the faculties, combined with absolute control of them, and with the power to see the whole of life clearly and to portray it with equal fulness and beauty. In other

minds genius is a mental derangement, and such men as Christopher Marlowe, Richard Savage, Robert Burns, Byron, George Frederick Cooke, and Edmund Kean are mentioned as examples of it. The actor *Clarence,* as embodied by Coghlan, was a type not so much of delirium as of passionate weakness. The attributes of the character are noble, but it lacks poise and self-control. Much that *Clarence* says is wild, inconsequent, and fatuous, and although his conduct is invariably picturesque it is seldom rational. That consideration would not be important if the drama were not, at several points, freighted with precept and moral reflection.

Looking at the character for itself, and discarding its parade of wisdom, the observer sees a compound of imagination, sensibility, tenderness, passion, pride, and generosity, and finds that those attributes are fused in a personality of exquisite grace. From first to last *Clarence* is displayed in situations that require dignity of demeanor, chivalrous emotion, great breadth of gesture, animated play of the countenance, diversified and expressive vocalism, and picturesque and flexible treatment. In each of those situations,—in the attitude of reverential devotion to woman, allegiance and deference to royalty, protection to innocence, fiery scorn for meanness, craft, and villany, tolerant yet not ungracious comradeship, and nonchalant, elegant self-possession,—Coghlan's acting showed a consummate mastery of his

art. He bore himself with impressive sincerity and acted with a passionate vigor that created the illusion of truth.

"CITIZEN PIERRE."

Coghlan's drama of "Citizen Pierre," in which he acted the principal character, was presented for the first time at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on April 11, 1899. The object of that play is threefold: to present an illuminative picture of the French Revolution; to arouse and sustain a feeling of anxious, sympathetic suspense on the part of the spectator; and, in the dramatic elucidation of a romantic plot, to show effective contrasts of character, together with a noble ideal of conduct. All stories which relate to the Reign of Terror necessarily move in a more or less beaten track. The time was one of tremendous political convulsion, and in such a time the dregs of society rise to the surface, the powers of evil assume a baleful sovereignty, and acts of hideous wickedness are done in the name of the law. Coghlan's story, while it contains strokes of original invention and is remarkable for a fresh treatment of an old historic theme, follows the inevitable course. Virtue and innocence, cruelly beset by potent and unscrupulous depravity, encounter deadly perils; but, while involved in a network of intrigue which has tragic issues, they are protected by vigilant and intrepid ingenuity, and ultimately they are saved by heroic valor and sublime self-sacrifice;

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

CHARLES F. COGHLAN.

and, incidentally, a touching and instructive revelation is accomplished of the full horror of that terrific upheaval of the French people which not only prescribed the future of France but more or less affected the political condition of the civilized world.

The chords that are struck in this drama are those of romance, pathos, terror, and pity. The play is constructed with singular ingenuity and is written in a concise, nervous style, without the waste of a moment or of a word. The current of its action, indeed, setting remorselessly toward a tragic close, is here and there somewhat arbitrarily forced; yet its process of development is logical and natural, so that, in the last analysis, it seems a round and perfect chapter from the book of inexorable fate. The place of the action is Paris. The time is June, 1793. King Louis the Sixteenth was butchered in January of that year, and Queen Marie Antoinette in the following October. The persons and deeds of the play stand midway between those two events. A plot has been contrived to liberate the *Queen* from prison in the Temple. The promoters of it are members of the Roman Catholic clergy. The principal agent in it is a flower-girl, named *Héloïse.* Written directions as to the *Queen's* procedure in making her escape have been enclosed in the calyx of a carnation, and a bunch of carnations, charged with this intelligence, is to be conveyed to the *Queen. Héloïse,* who is secretly loved by *Pierre de Briard,*—

once a member of the *King's* guard, now a soldier of the Republic,—has been saved, by him, from molestation and insult by various ribald patriots. *Pierre,* who is the hero of the drama, can be described as a sane man among vicious lunatics and a gentleman among ruffians. It is made known that *Pierre,*—having influence with a certain *General Lebel,* once his comrade in the Royal Guard, but now a red republican,—has befriended *Hermance de Vannes,* the foster sister of *Héloïse,* and that *Hermance,* in order to save the life of her father, and also that of her betrothed lover, *Bertrand,* has become the wife of *General Lebel,*—her lover, *Bertrand,* passing as her brother, under the name of *Paul.* The First Act of the drama skilfully shows the relations of these persons and formulates the plot for the *Queen's* liberation,—a plot to which *Paul* is privy, but of which *Pierre* is ignorant.

In Act Second, which is devoted to an explanation between *Héloïse* and *Pierre* and to the furtherance of the royal plot, it is contrived that *Hermance,* against the will of *Héloïse,* shall be made the bearer of the incriminating carnations which are to be carried to the *Queen. Pierre,* meantime, has obtained a passport, and has arranged that *Paul* and *Hermance* can, if they are so minded, escape from France,—it being apprehended that *General Lebel* intends his wife for the guillotine. The scheme for the rescue of the *Queen* is discovered, and *Hermance* is condemned to death. In Act Third

Héloïse, who, innocently, has been the means of bringing this doom upon her cherished friend, refuses to betray the originators of the plot, withstands the entreaties of *Pierre* that she will fly with him from France, and, when about to be arrested by the republican rabble, swallows poison and so dies. *Pierre,* who has endeavored to shield *Héloïse* by pretending to be the chief conspirator, baffled in his kindly purpose, repudiated by *Paul,* who thinks him to be a traitor and an enemy, and heartbroken by the tragic ending of his dream of love, now concentrates his energies upon the salvation of *Paul* and *Hermance.* There is an interlude, in which he vainly endeavors to obtain the friendly intercession of *Danton,* to whom he discloses his true name and history; and this passage is especially interesting for its portraiture of that famous tribune of the people.

The scene then shifts to the hall of the condemned, in the Conciergerie, where *Hermance* is a prisoner, with scores of other wretches who are presently to die; and the ghastly effect of this appalling picture is heightened by accessories (the gambling of turnkeys, the ribaldry of soldiers, the portrayal of wretchedness, sickness, and death, and the sound of singing mingled with the wail of lamentation), which only too truthfully denote the frightful suffering and all the hideous brutality and woe of that accursed place. *Paul,* who has obtained a card of admission and departure, comes to the Concier-

gerie, intending to perish with *Hermance;* but *Pierre,* who is possessed not only of a similar card, but of a passport for two persons, also penetrates into the prison, and, at a word, and by an adroit subterfuge, accomplishes the dying wish of *Héloïse,* by sending *Hermance* and *Paul* upon the road to freedom. The miscreant *Lebel,* following *Paul* to the prison, intent upon his death, is stabbed there, by one of the victims of his cruel treachery. At the last the gate is thrown wide open, and a voice is heard, calling, one by one, the names of the condemned prisoners, and, as the name of *Pierre de Briard* is spoken, the self-immolated hero, singing the refrain of a French song, passes firmly and gayly out of sight. "Mourir pour la patrie." That is the play,—founded on the novel, by Dumas, of "Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge."

The character of *Pierre de Briard* inevitably suggests that of *Sidney Carton,* in "A Tale of Two Cities." Each of them figures in the Reign of Terror. Each is a lofty soul among miscreants and tranquilly supreme over the tremor of a terrible environment. Each is cool and intrepid amid deadly perils. Each is fertile and expeditious in honorable craft. Each aims at a beneficent purpose. Each is a lover. Each dies, self-sacrificed, upon the guillotine: and, in both cases, the sacrifice of life is made for the protection of others and for the sake of a beloved woman. The resemblance between them is such as exists between all heroes of

stories of the French Revolution. *Sidney Carton* is a man of wild and wayward genius, a compound of serious enthusiasm and kindly cynicism, and a moral wreck, and he gives his life to save the husband of the woman whom he loves. *Pierre de Briard* is a reformed scapegrace, a rational patriot, a political idealist, a light-hearted, careless, drifting waif, an easy-going good fellow, whose mind has suddenly been aroused to the sense of public duty, and whose heart has been smitten by an absorbing passion; and he gives his life to accomplish the good purpose of a woman who is dead. Coghlan equally as an author and an actor, in his portraiture and in his embodiment of *Pierre,* manifested a profound comprehension, such as naturally appertains to the mature experience of a man of genius, of the noble side of human love. The *Romeo* style of man,—selfish with youthful egotism and infatuation, and half insane with grief and misery,—grows wearisome to a rational mind, and it is a relief sometimes to see a man who, capable of perfect love, can cast away all thought of himself, and can do an absolutely holy deed of self-sacrifice. It was Coghlan's way, in acting, to make his stage characters live,—giving no hint of premeditation in their conduct or of preparation in their speech. His impersonation of *Pierre* was extraordinary for fluent grace, the reality and consistency of nature in the execution, and for deep feeling covered, but not concealed, beneath a sparkling demeanor of that humor-

ous sweetness which goes with a good heart, a guileless mind, and a sane, healthful condition, as well of body as of spirit. In the constitution of *Pierre* there is no element that is either fanatical or morbid, and, whether in uttering love, braving danger, beguiling sinister authority, meeting disaster, or contriving happiness for others at the cost of his own life, *Pierre de Briard,* as embodied by Coghlan, moved with perfect simplicity to a climax of exquisite art. The consummate proficiency of the actor was seen in the fervency, yet splendid control, of emotion, at the afflicting crisis of the death of *Héloïse;* while his highest denotement of genius was apparent in the expression of *Pierre's* happiness when going to death. Nothing, in its peculiar way, as high and as pathetic as Coghlan's acting, in that situation, had been seen in the Theatre since the wonderful picture with which Henry Irving crowned and closed his matchless impersonation of *Robert Landry,* in "The Dead Heart."

XXXIII.

JOHN HARE (FAIRS).

1844—19—.

The incapacity for theatrical management which is characteristic of many of the speculators who hire theatres, gamble in theatrical ventures, and call themselves "theatrical managers" has been exemplified often and in various ways. A conspicuous indication of it has been the stupidity which has marked the introduction of foreign actors to the American Stage. In bringing to our Theatre a distinguished actor from another country the design, manifestly, should be to place him before our public in worthy plays, affording scope for the ample display of his artistic abilities; to present him first in a good play, which will make a strongly favorable impression; to hold in reserve other plays, the subsequent presentation of which will deepen and strengthen the favorable impression first created, and maintain the public interest after the excitement incident to novelty and curiosity has begun to subside; and, by these judicious and honorable means, insure for him and for his manager the largest measure of merited public admiration and monetary profit. This proposition is self-evidently sound,—stating a course of procedure which it might be pre-

sumed would occur to any manager possessed of common-sense. Yet it is seldom that a foreign actor has been introduced on our Stage with intelligent prevision as to those desirable results. The first American tour of Henry Irving provided a signal example of incompetent management. When Irving first came to America, in 1883, he brought an excellent company; a strong, varied repertory, comprising "The Bells," "King Charles I.," "King Louis XI.," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Lyons Mail," "The Belle's Stratagem," "Hamlet," "Much Ado About Nothing," and "King Richard III."; superb settings for every one of those plays, and a leading actress, Ellen Terry, in whom public interest was second only to that felt in himself. His success was prodigious, but not even one-half as much was accomplished as might easily have been, by sagacious management. His advent was effected "under the direction of" Henry E. Abbey, a genial, well-meaning, pretentious person, an inveterate gambler, a typical trader in theatricals, who rose like a sputtering skyrocket in the empyrean of theatrical speculation and descended like the proverbial burnt stick. At the time of Irving's advent Edwin Booth was supreme in the American Theatre, and at least a dozen first-class actors, familiar to our public in standard Shakespearean parts, were visible. Yet the counsel insistently thrust on Irving was that he should begin in New York as *Hamlet,* by way of challenging comparison, at the

outset, with the reigning national favorite, in his supreme impersonation! And that sort of policy was, and still is, advocated as "theatrical management"! I recall a conversation, in London, in 1882, in which the subject was earnestly discussed, and in which, as I am now glad to remember, I urged Irving to reserve *Hamlet* and to begin in New York as *Mathias,* in "The Bells,"—which he did. "The Bells" would have sufficed to fill the theatre for at least a fortnight. None of the other plays he had brought to America would have failed to do the same, for at least twelve consecutive nights. After they had all been produced, in sequence, a month could have been profitably filled with repeated selections from the repertory. Irving could have had at least ten weeks of bounteous prosperity in New York, saving his strength and doing himself justice in every performance, and the same course slightly modified could have been followed in a few of the leading cities,—after which period of methodical exertion he could have returned to England well and strong, instead of going, as he did, nearly exhausted; and his gains would have been far greater, though, notwithstanding mismanagement, his gross receipts were exceptionally large: $405,634. Following this course he would, also, have prepared an even richer financial harvest to be garnered on his return. Abbey desired, figuratively speaking, brass bands, torchlight processions, and red fire, all the time. Irving, strange to our country, permitted

his judgment to be overruled, though not without protest; accepted Abbey's advice as an American "theatrical manager" whom he supposed to be competent and familiar with the business conditions, and, having opened in "The Bells," produced the most of the heavy repertory that he had brought—making prodigious efforts—acting *Mathias, King Charles the First, King Louis the Eleventh, Shylock, Lesurques, Dubosc, Doricourt, Benedick,* and *Glo'ster* (in one scene), and reciting "The Dream of Eugene Aram"—and closed his first engagement in the American metropolis, all in twenty-seven days!

Similar bad judgment was displayed when that other great English actor John Hare,—one of the most exquisite artists who ever set foot on a stage,—was brought to America. Hare, having in his repertory such parts, for example, as *Sir Patrick Lundy,* in "Man and Wife"; *Sir Peter Teazle,* in "The School for Scandal"; *Dunscombe Dunscombe,* in Robertson's comedy "M. P."; *Colonel Daunt,* in "The Queen's Shilling," and *Benjamin Goldfinch,* in "A Pair of Spectacles," accepted bad advice and presented himself to the American public as the *Duke of St. Olpherts,* in Arthur Pinero's drama about *Mrs. Ebbsmith.*

"THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."

This play, although cleverly written, is coarse, dismal, and tedious. The invention is artificial and the theme,—

the arrangement of amatory relationship between the sexes, irrespective of religion, law, and usage,—is offensively indelicate. Pinero had not been long a dramatist before he began to manifest the impatience natural to a brilliant mind when encompassed by an irritating environment of dense conventionality. That impatience soon developed into an active resentment, and many of his subjects,—beginning with that of the tainted "Second Mrs. Tanqueray,"—seem to have been chosen in a mood of audacity and with a view, chiefly, to startling or shocking effect.

Mrs. Ebbsmith is a Crazy Jane, who thinks that love is above law and who, with the best of feelings and motives, consorts with another woman's husband, and so drifts into deplorable entanglement and trouble. She is a freak; her chaotic personality is not representative, her notions are fantastic, her talk is nonsense, and she acts like a fool. At the outset it is made known, with exasperating prolixity, that, being a widow, after an unpleasant experience of matrimony, she has become a trained nurse, and has fallen in love with one of her patients,—a man who is temporarily separated from his wife. He also is a martyr to unhappy marriage. The two make a compact to live together, and to reform the world by writing for the magazines. The *Duke of St. Olpherts,* as one of the infatuated husband's friends, tries to separate those partners in folly. *Mrs. Ebbsmith,* who previously has been dressed as a grim dowdy,

opposes the *Duke,*—deeming him a subtle enemy,—by adorning her person and exerting her feminine charms, but her lover, being an hysterical molly-coddle, weakens and signifies his willingness to return to his wife and his "career," if his partner in the great work of social reformation will consent to be his mistress. From that proposal the lady revolts, and the end is her departure from her fool's paradise.

The play was,—as usual in such cases,—heralded as a "Lesson": it might be instructive if performed before audiences composed exclusively of female loons, but for all other assemblages its "teaching" is not less impudent than ridiculous. The fact that marriage is the cornerstone of human society needs no corroboration from the Stage. Pinero's design appears to have been to provide a grotesque, bizarre, and, if possible, astounding effect. *Mrs. Ebbsmith* in her revolt against marriage and her violent desire to keep her lover (a person who, as depicted, any woman in her senses would have rejoiced to escape) hurls a copy of the Holy Bible into the fire, and then snatches it out again, and that proceeding was supposed to be sublime, whereas actually it was ludicrous.

The part of the *Duke of St. Olpherts* is a feeder to that of *Mrs. Ebbsmith.* Any experienced comedian could effectively present the elegant, elderly, imperturbable, cynical man of the world. That has been done hundreds of times and, being done, has promptly been

forgotten. Hare, without the least apparent effort, made the bland *Duke* so distinctive and so much a human being that at once he took a place in pleased remembrance. His acting, undemonstrative, symmetrical, and instinct with the exquisite grace of perfect spontaneity, irresistibly recalled the days and ways of such great masters of histrionic art as Henry Placide and John Gilbert. In personating *St. Olpherts* his formality of method was so severe that it would have been frigid but for the fine humor by which it was suffused and warmed. No trait was omitted, no peculiarity forgotten, no exaggeration allowed to mar the outline of the portrayal; the artistic fabric was exact and true, but working with such gossamer material the comedian could make little more than the adumbration of a character.

"A PAIR OF SPECTACLES."

To the credit of the American audience the noxious "Mrs. Ebbsmith" was received with chilling indifference. It was soon withdrawn, and on January 6, 1896, Hare revived the charming comedy of "A Pair of Spectacles." That play, derived and altered from a French original, "Les Petits Oiseaux," by Sidney Grundy, had previously been made known on the American Stage,—having been produced, October 30, 1891, at the Madison Square Theatre, with that fine eccentric comedian James Huddart Stoddart and his worthily kindred professional associate Edmund Milton

Holland in the leading characters. The coming of "A Pair of Spectacles," after the "Ebbsmith" trash seemed to accent the remark of an old English philosopher, that "there are some things more fit to be looked at than others." Hare, as the *Duke of St. Olpherts,* had embodied the smiling worldliness which never ceases to glitter with polish of urbane manners: in every particular he was an aristocrat. Hare, as *Benjamin Goldfinch,* while still an aristocrat, was the incarnation of cheery benevolence, and his fine personality was clearly and delightfully revealed.

There is a realm of art in which the creatures of fancy are all noble, beautiful, sympathetic, and winning, and in which the observer, whether reader or spectator, meets them with pleasure and gratitude. *Goldfinch,* as embodied by Hare, was one of the rarest and dearest of that brotherhood of perpetual friends. The character is one on which imagination loves to dwell, but it is not one that can easily be made impressively actual in representation, for the double reason that, while wearing the guise of every-day, it is to some extent symbolical, and is a compound of those constituents of virtue,—goodness, kindness, sweetness, gentleness, ignorance of guile, and absolute trust in human nature,—which are not, intrinsically, dramatic. The effective acting of it would be possible only to a man of deep heart, exquisite sensibility, and lovely temperament, possessing likewise splendid artistic faculty of impersonation. The part

From a Photograph by Elliot & Fry, Copyright. *In the Collection of the Author.*

JOHN HARE

as

Mr. Benjamin Goldfinch, in "A Pair of Spectacles."

of *Rip Van Winkle* endeared itself to millions because Joseph Jefferson's winning personality reinforced, illumined, and exalted it. The part of *Dr. Primrose* became both poetic and lovable because the magnetic personal charm and delicate art of Henry Irving raised it from conventionality and made it beautiful. Hare as *Benjamin Goldfinch* captured public sympathy and affection because of the intrinsic charm of his personality combined with his perfect command of the means and resources of dramatic art,—a method of acting at once brilliant and true. His spirit shone through his acting and endeared and hallowed it, and his acting was superb.

"A Pair of Spectacles" is one of the best plays of its period,—fortunate in conception, ingenious in construction, intellectual in purpose, continuous in movement, various with contrasted character, sprightly with incident, bright with humor, vital with feeling, and full of kindness and cheer. All persons capable of deriving pleasure from whatever is simple, healthful, gentle, and good,—without even once being trivial or insipid,—would enjoy it while it was passing and be happier for having seen it. Hare entered so completely into the blithe, ingenuous spirit of *Goldfinch* that his every action seemed natural, and it was only in retrospect that the transcendent felicity of his art was fully appreciated.

The story in which this amiable character so delightfully figures inculcates trust in human goodness, and that admonition is always a matter of vital importance

to the community. *Goldfinch,* a generous, credulous man, borrows the spectacles of his brother *Gregory,* an acquisitive, suspicious, cynical person, and as he views his circumstances through that new medium sees all things in an evil light. The obscuration is temporary: at the last he sees once more with his own eyes, and his equanimity is restored: but in the meantime he has passed through an experience of doubt, disbelief, disappointment, jealousy, and pain, the incidents of which are by turns sorrowful and humorous. The spontaneity of unconscious, involuntary humor with which Hare expressed and illustrated the change in *Goldfinch's* nature from sweet and gentle credulity to misanthropical sapience, culminating in jealousy of the excellent *Mrs. Goldfinch* and her blameless pastor, was delicious. The touch of pathos in his voice and manner, when the elderly husband finds in his young wife's desk a packet labelled "His Letters,"—a packet which he will not open and gently lays aside, not knowing that the letters it contains are from himself,—was exquisite in its tenderness and simplicity. Few impersonations as completely instinct with influential goodness as Hare's *Benjamin Goldfinch* have been seen in our time or are recorded in Stage history. No performance has been seen better worth the serious consideration of students of the art of acting or more richly entitled to commemoration by the historian of the Theatre.

Hare's performance of *Lord Kilclare,* in the one-act

play of "A Quiet Rubber," made by Charles Coghlan, on the basis of "La Patrie de Piquet," was kindred in spirit with his *Goldfinch,* but widely different in form. *Lord Kilclare,* a fastidious elderly aristocrat, resents an imaginary affront and wishes to engage in a duel, but after having dozed a little while, under the soothing influence of chloroform, kindly administered to relieve suffering, is persuaded that he has only been dreaming of quarrel and insult. Hare's assumption of the haughty, refined, punctilious, fiery, yet gentle and somewhat decrepit, old gentleman was indeed supreme in the charm of delicacy and in the force of emotional effect. It was exactly proportioned, it possessed the distinction of innate superiority, and it created for the spectator a perfect and delightful illusion. In *Lord Kilclare* as in *Goldfinch* the flexible equilibrium of each successive mood and the expressive modulation of voice with which each feeling was uttered were particularly significant of consummate art.

"THE HOBBY HORSE."

Hare's first American tour ended at Abbey's Theatre, New York, on May 2, 1896, and he immediately returned to England, but in the same year, on November 4, he sailed from Liverpool for New York, whence he proceeded to Montreal, where his second tour of America was begun on November 16. On January 4, 1897, he reappeared in New York, at the theatre which had been

called Abbey's but which,—Abbey having died,—had passed into a new control and had been named the Knickerbocker. The play then produced by him was Pinero's pleasing comedy of "The Hobby Horse," a composition written in its able author's earlier and better style, without extravagance of plot, sophistry of ethics, or cynicism of purpose. In "The Hobby Horse" there is a various picture of social life, every element of which is equally fine and true, and of which the total effect is commingled regret and humor. The story is marked by the simplicity characteristic of all good art. *Spencer Jermyn,* an elderly, wealthy English gentleman, fond of "The Turf," has, in pursuance of a hobby, founded on his rural estate a Home for Broken-down Jockeys. His young wife, also in pursuance of a hobby, has tried to found a Home for Destitute Orphans, but, failing in that plan, has indulged her philanthropical proclivities by assuming the name of *Clara Moxon,* that of one of her friends, and under that name,—in her husband's absence and without his knowledge,—has become a companion to the niece of the *Rev. Joel Brice,* curate of St.-Jacob's-in-the-East, designated "the poorest parish in London." She is no more fortunate, though, in her second charitable venture than in her first, and the riding of her hobby-horse brings her into a serious dilemma. The *Curate,* who supposes her to be a single woman, falls in love with her. The slums disgust her. She returns to her home. In the meantime her husband,

seeking for his lost son,—a child of his first wife, deceased,—has visited the parish of St.-Jacob's-in-the-East, and on coming home has brought the *Curate* to be Warden of his Asylum for Jockeys. The consequence is embarrassment in the *Jermyn* household. The comedy is made up of the weaving and unweaving of this tangle, an explanation of *Mrs. Jermyn's* rash venture in philanthropy, an exposure of the hypocrisy and ingratitude of *Mr. Jermyn's* pensioners, and a mildly satirical rebuke of the folly of riding the hobby-horse to death. Each character in the comedy is distinctly drawn, and alike in the conduct of the plot and the significance of the colloquies there are careful thought, warm feeling, practical sagacity, playful satire, and clear revelation of the capability of looking at human nature and social life as a whole,—seeing not only character and conduct but their environment and consequences. The play is flecked with touches of farce and interspersed with ingenious and comic equivoke, and in its implied and righteous condemnation of injudicious philanthropy it suggests a truth of much value. The best precept ever uttered as to charity is that of Balzac: "Do that which is next you."

The radically English character of "The Hobby Horse," making the play somewhat obscure to an American audience, militated against its success in America, and it was soon withdrawn. Hare's appearance in it signally exemplified one of the customs of his professional career

in which he has been peculiar—the custom of choosing for himself characters that do not overshadow their surroundings, but are contributary to a large, general scheme of dramatic significance and effect. *Spencer Jermyn* is a character of that kind, and furthermore he is often absent from the scene. Hare nevertheless dominated the representation, because of the exhilarating vitality, droll humor, and personal authority of his performance, the lance-like delivery of telling words, and the convincing truth of the embodiment.

"CASTE."

It has always been a privilege to see the play of "Caste," when well acted, because, within its province,—the delineation of manners, for the purpose of diffusing refinement, wisdom, and charity,—it satisfies every need equally of the Stage and Society. It possesses story, characters, incidents, action, humor, sentiment, intellectual design, bright dialogue, and an excellent style, and its significance is so valuable that every mind is better for the comprehension of it. When Hare (who acted *Sam Gerridge* in the original production of "Caste" in London) laid aside "The Hobby Horse" and for the first time in New York assumed the character of *Eccles* (Knickerbocker Theatre, January 18, 1897), he presented that garrulous humbug and tipsy loafer, not as merely a predestined drone and a confirmed sot, but as almost a broken-down gentleman, certainly as

the wreck of a once respectable person; and by doing that he made the character far more important than any actor had done who preceded him in it. The impersonation was exceedingly interesting and exceptionally instructive. It implicated the doctrine of heredity, for it was based on a thoughtful consideration of the contrasted characters of *Esther* and *Polly* as compared with that of old *Eccles,* who is their father; and it was a fascinating study for the analyst of art.

Robertson was a disciple of Thackeray. He looked on the inexorable facts of life, and he clearly saw the immitigable sorrow of it, and its profound, everlasting pathos. His plays, in all of which his art obeys the great law of selection, employ, by means of action, precisely the expedients that Thackeray employed by means of narrative,—namely, contrast and suggestion. He sets beauty against deformity; strength against weakness; hope against memory; the ardent anticipation of youth against the mournful lassitude and silent patience of age. His mind was contemplative and his temperament, though kindly, was somewhat cynical, so that it was natural he should especially feel the influence of Thackeray,—probably the strongest as well as the best intellectual influence, with thinkers of the highest and finest order, that has been exerted in the literature of fiction; certainly the best since Scott.

In "Caste," which is the best of Robertson's plays and the epitome of his observation and thought, echoes

of "Pendennis" and "Vanity Fair" are clearly audible. The drama is not imitative: its originality would never be questioned: but there can be no doubt of its school. *Esther* trying to fasten *D'Alroy's* sword to his side is *Amelia* over again, with *Osborne's* scarlet scarf pressed against her bosom. *Eccles,* refine that old reprobate as you will, remains a variant of *Costigan.* The drift of Robertson's thought is clear and it can easily be followed. The truth that he enforced is not novel,—only, in general, it is not recognized. The principle shown in "Caste" is existent in Nature: all the constitutions that ever could be framed and all the laws that ever could be enacted would not eradicate or modify it. The "silk purse" and the "sow's ear" have always existed and always will exist, and out of their existence spring the contrasts, humorous and pathetic, which diversify the melancholy pageant of human life. Robertson's beautiful comedy is the "picture in little" of universal society. The dramatist had a true eye for those contrasts; he chose his materials with wisdom, and he disposed them with unerring constructive skill. In this play, as in actual life, the elements of nature are mixed in that subtle manner which no ingenuity can explain. A grocer's grandson proves to be a natural aristocrat. The daughter of a drunken plebeian nevertheless possesses the innate refinement of a gentlewoman and becomes the wife of a nobleman not intrinsically as noble as herself, while at the same time her sister, honest and

kind, but common, shows the pertness of a hoyden and gravitates into marriage with an amiable vulgarian, who in turn shows himself to be naturally capable of considerate conduct. Throughout the whole fabric of humanity innate fineness and innate coarseness spontaneously assert themselves side by side. *Eccles* is a representative plebeian. Hare portrayed him as such, yet into his portrayal he infused a denotement, exceedingly subtle but visible to discriminating observation, of former worth, now lost and gone. Both Thackeray and Robertson must have been acquainted with that acute, incisive, truthful exposition of human nature and social manners, Jane Austen's novel of "Mansfield Park," and neither of them, it can be presumed, could have forgotten *Fanny Price's* father, old *Price,* of Plymouth. It might not be impossible to trace *Eccles* back to his prototype, but perhaps " 'twere to consider too curiously to consider so," and possibly Hare,—although his treatment of the idea was exceedingly thoughtful,—may have "considered too curiously" when he determined to put the gloss of antecedent worth of character on the gross, mean, vulgar, tipsy pothouse orator. Heredity does not always work out as Dr. Lucas and his disciples declare. Many an honest man has been the child of dishonest parents; many a delicate mother has borne sturdy, vigorous sons. Reversions to type do occur, and it may be that *Esther Eccles* and her sister *Polly,* in the homely term so often heard,

"favor" their mother or "throw back" to a remote progenitor. Acute observers can discern processes of thought in acting; the average theatrical auditor usually sees only results, and obviously the imperative essential in acting *Eccles* is comic emphasis of vulgar plebeianism as opposed to shocked and horrified refined aristocracy. Such men as *Eccles* are not uncommon. They exist in all countries—indolent, self-indulgent, garrulous, conceited; possessing just enough shrewdness to prey on the humane instincts of their relatives and extort a precarious subsistence out of the industry of others, and just enough disordered information, gleaned from spouting demagogues and reckless newspapers, to be fired with that peculiar animosity so well described by Bulwer as "noisy hatred of the rich, from love of the riches." *Eccles* exemplifies the sottish parasite that attaches itself to the righteous and natural discontent of underpaid Labor and retards reforms which have become essential to the continuance of civilized society.

Hare's acting showed that he had studied this breed with fine intuition and patient, microscopic care. There is no doubt that vanity should be included among the passions: it is, indeed, the strongest of them all. Hare laid great stress on the vanity of *Eccles,* his condition of abject slavery to the diseased appetite for alcoholic drink, and the shattered condition of the nervous system resultant from it. Vanity and drink have made *Eccles* a wreck, and so Hare showed him, and he even made

the ravaged figure of the old sot pathetic by the implied suggestion that *Eccles* would be a better man if he only could resist the craze for liquor, and thus he made him pitiable more than contemptible. It was the most intellectual impersonation of the part ever given and, though it did not efface earlier performances, in a different vein, by George Honey and William Davidge,—being less ruggedly real and less humorous,—it was more delicately artistic, fashioned by carving like that of a cameo and adorned by tracery like that of lace. The business that Hare employed when *Eccles,* fuming with discontent and irritation, is filling his pipe with such few scraps of tobacco as he possesses, will serve to exemplify his method. He first turned back the table-cloth so that the flakes of tobacco spilled in filling his pipe might fall upon a hard surface from which he could brush up every particle, which he did with indescribable meanness of manner; then looked impatiently for means of lighting his pipe, suddenly remembered the business circular that had been handed to him by *Gerridge* and which he had covered when turning back the cloth; peevishly uncovered and snatched it up, twisted it into a spiral, lighted it at the fire and lit his pipe with it,—all the time, without a single word, showing the characteristic traits of the man and the signs of his condition,—gross selfishness, inebriate temper, egotism, vulgarity, resentful sense of penury, and hopeless degradation. The spectacle was, in a way, comic, but it was also very sad.

Acting could do no more with the part of *Eccles* than was done with it by John Hare. It caused the laugh and the tear at the same moment. It touched the heart, and it remains in memory forever.

A DEPLORABLE VENTURE.

In the course of a long life, largely and almost continuously devoted to study and criticism of Acting and Actors in their relations to Society, while I have incurred much enmity and censure, I have derived comfort and encouragement from the knowledge that many intellectual members of the dramatic profession and many thoughtful persons in other walks of life have expressed emphatic approbation of the artistic principles and the public policy which I have advocated and pursued. I have earnestly desired always to occupy the right position and always to be just. When I found that a man as intellectual and an actor as accomplished as John Hare could produce "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" and defend and extol "The Gay Lord Quex" I was impelled to search my mind and, for perhaps the hundredth time, to review the reasons which had caused me to condemn such plays; to labor for their banishment from our Stage, and seek to cause their failure when obtruded there. It is hard to censure those persons whom we respect and admire, and opposition to any large measure of public opinion should have substantial grounds for its support. I did not find, on reviewal of

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Thomas R. Smith, Esq.*

JOHN HARE

as

Lord Quex, in "The Gay Lord Quex."

the whole subject, nor have I since been able to find, any reason why I should doubt the soundness of my position or reverse my conscientious judgment as to the eminently mischievous influence of such plays or cease to denounce them as injurious to the public taste and the public morals. The impression that was left on my mind by Hare's defence and encomium of "The Gay Lord Quex" and other compositions of a kindred character will here best be indicated by reprint of remarks that I wrote at the time of the comedian's public celebration of that play.

THE SWEET BY AND BY.

From My Dramatic Journal: August 15, 1900:—The felicity of Artemus Ward as a humorist was his perfectly serious aspect when making a comic deliverance. The excellent comedian John Hare seems to have furnished a shining example of that same felicity, in his remarkable speech at the annual dinner of the Royal Theatrical Fund, in London. Mr. Hare's drift was the objurgation of a man named Smith, who, in the House of Commons, had actually ventured to object to "immoral plays." Smith, it appears, dislikes bacon,—or even Shakespeare,—when rancid, and he is so densely illiberal that if he takes Mrs. Smith and the little Smiths to the play he does not want them to see a stage exhibition of Mrs. Potiphar's celebrated interview with Mr. Joseph, or even an illustration of the dilemma of Miss Anonyma when her twenty-first

paramour protested against her old score. Mr. Hare showed deep emotion; that is to say, he kept a straight face; and he flayed the presumptuous Smith without mercy for his bigoted antagonism to "the proper expression of Art." The Smiths, he declared, have always taken "limited views,"—preferring early vegetables and disliking bad smells. One Smith, indeed, whom he remembered,—an official Smith,—had the amazing and intolerable stupidity to ostracize that fragant and fascinating play about the Parisian courtesan, *Camille,* —a play, said the shocked and impassioned Mr. Hare, which is "one of the most brilliant, instructive, and moral comedies of our time." Other Smiths, he was satisfied, would interdict the salacious *Mrs. Tanqueray,* that most caloric of generous "housekeepers,"—matrimonially chosen because she had lived successfully with most of her husband's male cronies,—the "advanced" *Mrs. Ebbsmith,* that valiant apostle of Platonism; the Shakespearean delicacy of "Measure for Measure," so various and so felicitous with hole-and-corner assignations, and even that other salubrious concoction of the sainted National Bard, "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," with its charming picture of life in a brothel; and any Smith who would do that would be quite capable of laying sacrilegious hands on "The Gay Lord Quex"—which would amount to a suppression, not to say an utter extinction, of English dramatic literature.

Mr. Hare has often shown himself to be a superb

comedian: his style, when he thus addressed the Royal Theatrical Fund Society, must have been that of consummate humor: but beneath his humor there was a potent exhilaration of audacity and a prodigious charm of candor. Other champions of the Frightful Example, —that is to say, the Nasty Drama,—have extolled its "humanity," its "sympathy," its "virility," its "originality," and, above all, its "popularity" as evinced by the gross receipts. The intrepid Mr. Hare did not hesitate to proclaim its Virtue! This, at last, was the right note. The Smiths have all been mistaken. The great need of the public is a perfectly clear elucidation of "love" and tuberculosis. By all means let us have the Demi-monde of Paris and "the Tenderloin" of New York in all our theatres! What could be more "brilliant" than the jocund gluttony of *Mme. Prudence,* when guzzling champagne out of a celery glass or a punchbowl! What more "instructive" than the interior of a gambling hell and the society of blacklegs and demireps! What more "moral" than disappointed "love" sucking a cough mixture and expiring in a white chemisette! There have been times when the votaries of the Theatre sought that shrine with some expectation of being refreshed by its pictures and cheered by its influence, but those were old-fogy times, and they are thought of no more. "These," as forcibly remarked by Mrs. Cora Urquhart Potter, when laying down her *Pillicoddy* and taking up her *Scuttle,* "are not the Dark

Ages"; and persons who go to the theatre nowadays expect the amplest information, especially as to matters that even the beasts of the field shield by a decent reserve. Let us have light! Nobody, at present, knows anything. Nobody recalls the Ten Commandments. Nobody reads the Book of Proverbs. Nobody remembers the Sermon on the Mount. Nobody is acquainted with the teachings of the New Testament. Everybody, accordingly, is hungry and thirsty for "moral lessons"; and where else shall that divine hunger and thirst be assuaged, if not within the sacred precincts of the Theatre? Where, particularly, shall the female bosom find moral nourishment, unless from some copious and vociferous English blonde whom Nature intended to be a barmaid, but whom Fate—and Vanity—have made an "actress"? What could be more propitious for the future of lovely woman, as daughter or wife or mother, than a long succession of *Tanquerays* and *Saphos?*

Mr. Hare is right. "If the Smiths were to prevail," said that bold orator, "the Drama would never be in its present healthy and flourishing condition." Most assuredly not. But let him be comforted. It is Jerusalem that reigns. It is the Charles Frohman, Klaw & Erlanger, Alf. Hayman, Nixon & Zimmerman Syndicate, and not the Smith faction, that rules our Stage. It is the Department Store system that now prevails in our theatres; and "Hamlet" can be bought at one counter, and "The Girl from Maxim's" at another, and

cash is running, all over the shop. Mr. Hare's benevolent desire to revive Fielding and Smollett and Swift, to make our girls acquainted with *Tom Jones* and to delight our boys with the *Houyhnhnms,* may perhaps be disappointed; but he need not be anxious as to the American fortunes of "The Gay Lord Quex." (Charles Frohman has come ashore with a bushel of personal pronouns in one bag and "The Husbands of Leontine" in another, and Olga Nethersole is coming back with *Sapho,* and the resolute Bernhardt will soon be on hand with the *Magdalen.)* There is no Smith in America. *Lord Quex* will have plain sailing and a rapturous welcome, and "lessons" will be as thick as blackberries, all over the land. Never was there such a good lookout as now for the public morals. The only danger is that our women, who, notwithstanding their many angelic attributes, are, after all, somewhat desultory, may grow a little weary of stage tuition. Even gospel truth becomes monotonous with iteration, and the chief "moral lesson" is not altogether a marvel. It was long ago crystallized by old *Verdun,* when he told the touching story of *Miss Baden* and the perjured *Count Cassell,* and with this solid chunk of wisdom came sweetly to a close:

"Then ye who now lead single lives
From this sad tale beware,—
And do not act as ye were wives,
Before ye really air."

"THE GAY LORD QUEX."

Hare effected his re-entrance on the New York Stage, beginning his last professional tour of America, on November 12, 1900, at the Criterion Theatre, as Pinero's *Lord Quex,* and the mischievous play which he had defended and a personation which had been extravagantly heralded were then and thus displayed. He had gone away in the light and honor of a lovely presentation: he returned to show himself in the shadow and blight of a blackguard character and to win rueful admiration for the excellence of his art in doing a thing that ought never to have been done.

"The Gay Lord Quex" is a comedy of amatory intrigue, contrived in bitterness and written in sarcasm, without any single admirable attribute except that of mechanical dexterity. In a technical point of view the play is an example of felicitously adroit construction, sprinkled all over its fibres and flexures and joints with a glittering steel-like powder of verbal piquancy. In every other point of view it is a melancholy bore. Its purpose, supposing it to have one, beyond that of providing a "strong scene," is to depict a corrupt phase of society, to exploit the character of a licentious, clever man, and to exemplify and declare that a blasé profligate, who has determined to marry and to lead a virtuous life, is the superior being, as compared with his chaste brethren of the human race (reluctantly admitting

that there are any), and much the better sort of man for a virtuous, beautiful young woman to approve and accept as her consort for life. Platitude and folly thus reach their climax. A medical writer of eminent authority has recorded the opinion,—and unquestionably it is a sound one,—that the old doctrine that a reformed rake makes the best husband has done more to propagate licentiousness and to disseminate disease than any other fallacious notion that ever took possession of the popular mind. In London "The Gay Lord Quex," produced on April 8, 1899, at the Globe Theatre, had a long and prosperous career. It was offered in New York with some changes from the London cast, but it was acted with a remarkable fusion of diversified talent, and it was mounted with exquisite taste. The preposterous character of the *Duchess of Strood,*—an adulteress and a hypocrite who is such a sentimental fool as not to know that she is either,—was played here with signal ability by Miss Ada Farrar, who thus sustained a considerable part of the burden of the piece,—for the action depends on that character. Gilbert Hare, son of John Hare, made a hit in the minor part of a tired official. The chief interest centred in John Hare, as *Lord Quex,* and Irene Vanbrugh as *Sophy Fulgarney.*

The posture of facts and proceedings manifested in the comedy is almost trite in its barren simpleness. *Lord Quex,* an elderly English nobleman, who had long been living in profligate ways, began to realize that he

was not as young as he used to be, fell in love with a beautiful, virtuous young woman, *Muriel Eden,* measurably prospered in his wooing of her, and thereupon determined to live decently and to adorn the holy state of matrimony. In this reformatory mood and plan he was opposed by *Sophy Fulgarney,* the foster sister of *Muriel Eden,* who disliked and distrusted him, and also he was momentarily hindered by the *Duchess of Strood,* who had been his paramour. That *Duchess* arranged with him that he should make a private nocturnal visit to her bedroom. *Miss Fulgarney,* accidentally becoming acquainted with this clandestine appointment, repaired betimes to an adjacent "coign of vantage," with a view to obtain positive proof of the duplicity of *Lord Quex,* meaning then to unmask him as an unregenerate libertine, and so frustrate his intended marriage with her beloved *Muriel. Lord Quex,* however,—being experienced in intrigue, wary, self-possessed, and easily predominant,—discovered her presence at his trysting place during the clandestine interview, penetrated her design, and so conducted a colloquy with her, after eliminating the frightened *Duchess,* as effectually to screen himself and to place *Miss Fulgarney* in a cruelly compromising position. A clash of wits ensued between the two, in which the intrepid girl behaved so well and exhibited so fine a spirit that the elderly rake became magnanimous and liberated her from a perilous thraldom of impending disgrace. *Muriel Eden,* mean-

time, had inclined to favor the suit of a certain *Captain Bastling,* supposed to be the pink of incarnate virtue, but that warrior, when tested by *Miss Fulgarney,*—who was determined that her foster sister should have a good husband,—unexpectedly disclosed a deplorable weakness, showing that, while valiant in the presence of Mars, he could make no resistance to the blandishments of Venus. At the last, *Miss Fulgarney,* perceiving the immense superiority of the regenerated profligate, relinquished her opposition, and the *Gay Lord Quex* triumphantly carried off his bride. " 'Twas ever thus, from childhood's hour." Even so, in the days of Auld Lang Syne, did *Lord Methuselah,* in the pages of Thackeray, walk away with dear *Emma Trotter.* "How charming it is," said that great writer, "to find virgin hearts quite unsullied, and to look on at little romantic pictures of mutual love!"

Hare, before bringing this gem of vulgar intrigue to America, told one of the English newspapers, when extolling "The Gay Lord Quex," that were it not that a bed can be seen from the boudoir of the *Duchess* no one, probably, would ever have made even the slightest objection to the play. In that case why not exclude the bed? If the bed is not there for any purpose connected with the play it should not be there at all. But that was subterfuge, and rather miserable subterfuge. Such talk only serves to show how surely and completely the long continued custom of infringing on

the public sense of propriety, not to say decency, has, among many theatrical persons, and among many of their followers, benumbed and obscured the instinct of refinement, the ideal of good taste and good manners, and the perception of right and wrong. A bed, in itself, is one of the most harmless and inoffensive of all existing objects. It suggests chiefly the condition which, perhaps, is the sum of human happiness,—sleep. Dr. Johnson, who touched on most things, touched playfully on this:

> "In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
> And, born in bed, in bed we die;
> The near approach a bed may show
> Of human bliss to human woe."

The dramatist, it is certain, had a motive in implicating the bed, and it was not a playful one. But it is not the presence of the bed that vitiates this play; it is, among other things, the introduction of that piece of furniture under circumstances artfully devised to make it tributary to a significant, vicious impartment. The presence of the bed in the Fifth Act of "Othello," or,—to name a more modern example, with which the name of John Hare is memorably associated,—in the chief act of the capital play of "Lady Clancarty," never yet gave offence to anybody, whether moralist or prig. It is not the presence of the bed that makes the scene offensive; it is the associated theme,—the

portraiture of warped natures, depraved manners, unhealthful things, and, over all and pervading all, the intimation of a kind of grim satisfaction and sardonic joy in the triumphant predominance of clever wickedness. That has long been the trend of Pinero's writings, and it has made them very dreary. That dramatist, as disclosed in his "Tanquerays," "Ebbsmiths," and "Quexes," is an artificial, pinchbeck satirist, intent only or chiefly on devising tainted theatrical situations, in order to show his cleverness in mechanical construction and in the voidance of splenetic sarcasm, while profitably pandering to a prurient taste. Not in our time has any playwright fallen away from a high standard and disappointed admiring expectation as Pinero did, when he deserted the ideals of "The Squire" and "Sweet Lavender" and began to manufacture such stuff as he exhibits in his "problem" plays. It is well-nigh inexplicable—or, rather, it would be were it not for remembrance of a complaint made by Sir Arthur to a person who objected to offensive plays: "You must remember that we dramatists have our living to make." It has long been a mistaken notion that a dramatist, to insure success, must choose a foul subject. That Pinero should subscribe to that notion is indeed deplorable—but it furnishes a measure of his mind in one direction, and it explains why, with all his extraordinary talent, he generally fails to write truly great plays. Dr. Johnson remarked that "a man who wants

to make himself conspicuous will tumble in a hog-sty, if people will only look at him and call him to come out." It would be painful to be obliged to believe that, in his arduous labors to evince "originality," command attention, and "earn a living," Sir Arthur has actually been compelled to resort to a kindred expedient: yet his course has sometimes enforced that belief. There can be no need of such vagaries. There is surely another and far better way of viewing the duty of an author to his vocation and his time. "One of the greatest objects I have always had in my career" (so wrote the fine old novelist G. P. R. James) "has been to show that fiction, without being dry and tedious, may be rendered serviceable to every noble principle, may be taught to convey every generous lesson, and, by interesting our good feelings, instead of our bad feelings, gain over imagination to the side of virtue, and, without crushing our passions, direct them aright."

It is a common cry of fools, and it can confidently be expected to become audible as often as protest is made against plays of the "Quex" order, that persons who object to tainted subjects on the stage are "Puritans," and necessarily are persons of prurient minds; the assumption being that when protest is made against a stench the fault is not in the stench but always in the nostrils of those to whom the stench is offensive. Hare specifically declared that he perceived nothing of an evil tendency in "The Gay Lord Quex,"

and that it is a thoroughly good play. In a period of acute and reckless competition, when an actor has obtained a successful drama,—by which is meant a drama that shows him, professionally, to advantage, and at the same time attracts the multitude,—it is natural that he should hold it with a determined grasp and that he should declare it to be excellent. It would be unusual for an actor, under such circumstances, to admit, even to himself, that he is doing wrong. Opinions differ. Hare, as *Lord Quex,* was vociferously and often applauded alike in England and America, and at home he was exceptionally prosperous through exploitation of that disreputable character. It is significant to remember that in America his prosperity with it was much less than had been expected. He told his English friends that his *Lord Quex* would encounter no opposition from the "Puritans" in America,—and he was correct. In fact the "Puritans" in America, such of them as exist, do not attend the Theatre. It is not, however, by "Puritans" that the protest is made, in this country, against rotten plays; it is by men of the world; it is by observers who know that theatrical talk about reformed rakes, old "rounders," and repentant hussies is fiddle-faddle; that theatrical solicitude about sexual dilemmas and "problems" is an idle pretence and a crying nuisance; that nobody has asked and nobody desires dramatists and actors, foreign or domestic, to provide expert testimony as to the several varieties and

the frequently dismal consequences of incontinence and infidelity in the married state; that people in general are sick of the whole disgusting theme and the whole wearisome tribe of its pitiful expositors; and that unless there is a change the Theatre will be deserted totally, as it already is, to a considerable extent, by the better elements of society,—meaning the intelligence, refinement, character, dignity, and solid worth of the American People.

One platitude in particular seems greatly to have impressed the race of technical writers of which Pinero is a conspicuous representative,—the platitude, namely, that an unchaste man or woman may sometimes be a "good fellow." That is the philosophic core of nearly all the off-color plays of our time. The proposition is not so astounding as to cause mental paralysis. Personal charm, whether in man or woman, can exist, and occasionally it does exist, independent of chastity; for personal charm is referable to the original fibre of the character. De Quincey records that one of the most enchanting women he ever beheld was Emma Hamilton, the paramour of Lord Nelson, a female who certainly represented recklessness rather than chastity. The rose is always the rose; it never turns into the thistle. There needs no Theatrical Digest of Vice to illustrate that fact.

The bedroom scene in Pinero's comedy was acted by Hare with a devilish felicity, and,—notwithstanding eccentricity and a painfully nasal enunciation,—with

much and varying emotion, felicitous piquancy, and telling force, by Miss Vanbrugh; but when you have seen and thoroughly considered "The Gay Lord Quex,"—if you are a person capable of thought and feeling,—you will leave the theatre saddened in mind and depressed in spirit. You will have learned, or you will have been assured, that the world is full of evil; that many men are actuated, in all their conduct, by one of two motives, greed or lust; that women, with but little exception, will make any and every sacrifice for social position; that the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"; that evil, if clever and rich,—as often it is,—can accomplish all its purposes; that the great practical age of To-day has no time for poetic visions and romantic dreams and no room for noble ideals; that it is vain to struggle against the colossal materialism now sweeping over the human race; and that the obvious and only part of wisdom is to worship "success" and ask no questions. That is the totality of impression which is left in a perceptive mind by "Quex," and in recalling that dreary, hopeless impartment you will not be cheered by reflecting that John Hare, one of the great comedians of his day, acting its central part, convincingly showed you how brilliant, trenchant, clever, and keen an artist he could be, even upon ill employment. For my part, though I write the facts as I saw them, I wish to think of him only as *Dunscombe, Sir Peter,* or *Benjamin Goldfinch,*—as the superb artist,

perfect in control of person, visage, demeanor, and movement, whose command of the springs of feeling, the fibres of character, the elements of situation, and the forces of dramatic effect, created and maintained an absolute illusion, causing his auditors to forget the stage and feel that they were looking on life itself. In truth, strength, depth, power, and tenderness, in concealment of effort, in ease and seeming spontaneity Hare, at his best and within his rightful field, stands with the greatest actors of his time. He did not seem to struggle upward to his aims but descended on them, and he gave unalloyed delight. The spectator of any one of his truly representative performances does not remember it as an ingenious exploit in acting, but as an actual person somewhere existent,—a droll, lovable incarnation of generosity and eccentricity, still devising schemes of goodness and continually operative for the welfare of others. *Richelieu,* as played by Edwin Booth; *Jesse Rural,* as played by John Gilbert; *Dr. Primrose,* as played by Henry Irving; *Blenkarn,* as played by Edward Willard; *Benjamin Goldfinch,* as played by John Hare, —those are veritable men, whom we have all known and loved, and they exist for us every moment and will never pass out of our lives.

XXXIV.

SARAH BERNHARDT.

1844?—19—.

"There is a kind of character in thy life,
That, to the observer, doth thy history
Fully unfold."

—Shakespeare.

The history of our Stage would be incomplete and indeed seriously defective without record and consideration of the career on it of the celebrated French actress, Sarah Bernhardt. The power and value of momentum in public life are significantly exemplified by the great popularity of Mme. Bernhardt, who, in making her many professional tours of the United States, has attracted large audiences in many parts of the country, and has received from the press in general such adulation and advocacy as have seldom been awarded to even the authentic benefactors of human society. The acting of Mme. Bernhardt, intrinsically, does not explain that liberal ebullition of popular enthusiasm. It has, indeed, been the acting of an accomplished executant, an experienced, expert imitator, within somewhat narrow limits, of the operations of human passion and human suffering: Mme. Bernhardt possesses ample

and exact control of the instruments of her vocation: but it has never been such acting as touches the heart, awakens sympathy, elicits the response of affectionate feeling, and ennobles the mind by manifestation of a great nature. The main cause of the extensive and bounteous public interest in Mme. Bernhardt is the fact that, for half a century, she has been almost continuously in the public eye, advertised by all sorts of ingenious expedients, discussed, praised, and censured, and thus invested with the combined attraction of restless activity and notable singularity. Mme. Ristori reigned to the end of her long career by reason of intrinsic greatness. Mme. Bernhardt has reigned chiefly by reason of singular personality and the augmenting momentum of continuance.

Several biographies of Mme. Bernhardt have been published—the most important of them being the one written by herself and issued, in English, in 1907. All those publications are more or less trivial and are poorly constructed. Her own account of her life contains some passages of interest, but, as a whole, it is diffuse, flamboyant, and artificial,—an eccentric contribution to theatrical annals, mottled over by affectation, egregious vanity, and the pervasive insincerity of an inveterate self-exploiter.

Sarah Bernhardt was born in Holland about 1844,—the child of wandering parents, of the Hebrew race and of Dutch origin. Little, comparatively, is known—

though much has been alleged—relative to her early life. One record states that she was born in Paris, October 22, 1845; another that she was born in Holland, at a later date. There are various accounts, differing both as to time and place. According to a statement made by herself, she ran away from her Dutch home at the age of fourteen and went to Paris, accompanied by a girl friend. She was subsequently placed in the convent de Grands Champs, near Versailles, where her conduct displeased her guardians: she was four times expelled, but on each occasion she was allowed to return, as a contrite sinner. Mme. Bernhardt appears to have been interesting, from the first. She was admitted to the Conservatoire, Paris, in 1861, having attracted the favorable notice of Auber, on the occasion of her appearance before the examining board. She studied under the tuition of ——— Provost, and, in 1862, she gained the second prize in tragedy, by which achievement she was enabled to obtain admittance to the theatrical company of the Théâtre Français. Her first professional appearance was made at that house, on September 1, 1862, as *Iphigénie,* in "Iphigénie en Aulide." Later, becoming dissatisfied, she withdrew from the Français and went, first to the Gymnase and then to the Porte Saint-Martin, but she did not make a decided impression at either of those theatres. On January 14, 1867, she appeared at the Odéon—where she had obtained an engagement through the influence of ———

Duquesnel—as *Armande,* in "Les Femmes Savantes," and there, subsequently, she acted *Sylvia,* in "Jean de l'Amour et Hassard." She first attracted special favor by her performance of *Zacharie,* in "Athalie," and her first distinguished success was gained as *Anne Damby,* the heroine of Dumas's play of "Sullivan"—known to the English-speaking Stage as "Kean."

During the siege of Paris (1870-'71) Mme. Bernhardt established a hospital, in the Odéon, and devoted herself to nursing the wounded defenders of that capital. On February 2, 1872, she reappeared at the Odéon as *Donna Maria, Queen of Spain,* in "Ruy Blas," causing much enthusiasm and winning the warm approval of Victor Hugo. On November 6, 1872, she reappeared at the Théâtre Français, acting *Mlle. de Belle Isle,* and there, later, she gave an effective performance in "La Fille de Roland." While associated with the Théâtre Français she alternated in characters of tragedy and comedy. On February 15, 1875, she was made a "sociétaire" of La Comédie Française and in 1879 she appeared for the first time as *Donna Sol,* in "Hernani," giving the most refined, poetic, and admirable of all her many impersonations. Her acting was acclaimed, and the play was repeated for many consecutive nights. On the night of its one-hundredth performance Mme. Bernhardt was the guest of honor at a banquet, given at the Grand Hotel, Paris, at which Victor Hugo presided, and where more than 150 persons, distinguished

in the arts, assembled to express their homage. On that occasion the eminent critic M. Francisque Sarcey presented to her, on behalf of "many admiring friends," a necklace of diamonds.

Later in 1879 she went to London with the entire Comédie Française company, which, under the management of the late John Hollingshead, appeared there at the Gaiety Theatre, when Bernhardt was first seen in the second act of "Phèdre." Her stay in London was attended by social honors, much enthusiasm, and substantial pecuniary profit,—the latter, then as always, being one of her principal objects. From that time onward her ambition seems to have been to 'ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm,' and that ambition was abundantly gratified. The circus-like methods of advertising for which, all her life, she has been remarkable, however derogatory to the dignity of an artist, have been eminently successful in accomplishing their purpose, and no name associated with the Theatre is more widely known than that of Sarah Bernhardt. In London she affronted propriety by directing attention to her son, a lad of fourteen, and, according to the newspapers of the period, she made a jest of his illegitimacy. Although she possesses,—and appears to deserve,—a reputation for profuse liberality on occasion, her love of gain seems always to have been as extreme and lively as even that of her famous predecessor, the renowned Rachel, of whom Mlle. Judith, a daughter

of the same race, said,—on being reproached for severity of stricture on her co-religionist: "It is true—we are both of the same religion—but with a difference: I am a Jewess;—but Rachel—Rachel is a Jew!" Mme. Bernhardt, however, was educated a Christian. In London she was wary of tuft hunters and she declined to be lured into giving recitations, etc., by social invitation; but she consented to appear at private houses on payment of $500 for each appearance involving professional effort. The London press teemed with gossip and scandal about her. Every device was employed, regardless of dignity and almost of decency, to excite public curiosity. An exhibition of her amateur paintings and statuary was effected. She wrote art criticisms for Paris newspapers. Wild tales were circulated concerning her proceedings,—some true, some false, no one of them more strange than the truth. Description was given of her coffin, in which, it was alleged, she sometimes slept, and of her pet skeleton, declared to be that of a man who had killed himself because of disappointment in a love affair. That grewsome object, it was said, held her bedroom mirror, before which she studied her parts, "in the dead vast and middle of the night," the script being clutched in its bony fingers. Information was provided relative to her pet dog and his ailments; her habits of life; her studio, etc. Receptions were held. Artists assembled to inspect her "works of art." Sir John Millais and Sir Frederick

Leighton viewed those fabrics. Mr. Gladstone was presented to her. At social dinners Mme. Bernhardt rouged her face and painted her lips. The artist was made vulgar; the art was disgraced; but money was accumulated in abundance, and vanity was gratified. Soon the actress offended the public by disappointing a large audience at the Gaiety. A wrangle ensued, in "The Standard." Mme. Bernhardt defended herself with the plea of illness. Later she declared herself affronted because, at a festival at the Mansion House, the Lord Mayor of London had appeared without his wig and because a bust of the Duke of Wellington was conspicuously displayed.

In April, 1880, she appeared, for the first time, as *Donna Clorinde,* in Augier's "L'Aventurière," and, taking offence at adverse criticism of her performance,—especially at an article published in "Figaro,"—she broke her contract with the Comédie Française, and left it, alleging, as a reason, that she had been compelled to act without sufficient rehearsal. In departing from that association Mme. Bernhardt addressed to Émile Perrin, the administrator, the following letter—curiously characteristic of the egotistic tone affected by certain "artists" relative to their vocation:

"You forced me, sir, to play when I was not ready. You allowed me only eight rehearsals on the stage, and the piece was rehearsed entire only once. I could not decide on appearing before the public, but you positively required it, and what I foresaw hap-

pened. The result of the performance surpassed my forebodings. One critic asserted that I played the *Virginie* of 'L'Assommoir' instead of the *Donna Clorinde* of 'L'Aventurière.' May Zola and Émile Augier forgive me! It is my first failure at the Comédie Française, and it shall be my last. I warned you on the day of the general rehearsal. You disregarded it. I kept my word. When you receive this I shall have left Paris. Pray receive my immediate resignation."

Much pother ensued on her withdrawal. A lawsuit was instituted and Mme. Bernhardt was fined $20,000, while also she forfeited about $8,000 which had been credited to her on the books of the Comédie reserve fund. The actual reason of her conduct, as distinguished from the fictitious reason assigned in her letter, was her perception of restricted freedom and opportunity at the French National Theatre and of the financial profit to be gained elsewhere. She announced her intention to retire from the stage within a short time.

At the Gaiety Theatre, London, on May 24, 1880, she acted, for the first time, *Adrienne Lecouvreur,* in the play of that name, a personation which was hailed with extravagant applause. Distinguished visitors from France as well as renowned inhabitants of England attended the theatre and beheld that achievement. Mr. Gladstone (ever ready with his epistolary effusions) favored the actress with a letter of congratulation. In the spring of 1880 Mme. Bernhardt played another engagement in London, and then the story was circulated that she was offended because Queen Victoria

had not invited her to visit Windsor Castle. In that way the advertising mill was continuously made to grind. At Copenhagen, at a festival, she obtained notoriety by a curt and impertinent reply to the toast "To France," which had been proposed, out of courtesy, by the German Ambassador, Baron Magnus.

On October 16, 1880, Mme. Bernhardt sailed from Havre, on board L'Amérique, landing in New York on October 26. On November 8, that year, she made her first appearance in America, at Booth's Theatre, New York (it was "Booth's" only in name,—having passed from the control of that great man in 1874), as *Adrienne,* in "Adrienne Lecouvreur." Henry E. Abbey, it was made known, had secured her services, for one hundred performances, at the rate of $1,000 for each performance and a liberal allowance for hotel and other expenses. In the course of her first American tour, after leaving New York, Mme. Bernhardt acted in fifty cities of America, including Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Memphis, Louisville, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. On April 18, 1881, she reappeared at Booth's Theatre, in "La Princesse Georges." On April 27, for the first time in this country she acted *Mrs. Clarkson* in "L'Etrangère." On April 30 she closed her first American engagement, and on May 4, aboard L'Amérique, she departed for France. Her repertory, during her first American tour, included

"Adrienne Lecouvreur," "Frou-Frou," "Hernani," "Phèdre," "Le Passant," and "La Dame aux Camélias." During that tour she gave 156 performances, and the total receipts were 2,667,600 francs—$553,520.

Mme. Bernhardt's second tour of America was made in 1886, when she visited Brazil, Chili, and Mexico before coming to the United States. On March 2, 1887, she appeared at Washington, D. C., acting *Camille.* From March 14 to April 12 she performed at the Star Theatre, New York, beginning in the play of "Fédora." That was her third New York engagement. Her fourth was from June 15 to 19. In the course of the season of 1887 she presented "Fédora," "Frou-Frou," "La Dame aux Camélias," "Le Maître des Forges," "Phèdre," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," "Hernani," "Lady Claire," and "Théodora." On June 20 she sailed for France. Her third American tour began in New York, at the Garden Theatre, on February 6, 1891, when, for the first time here, she presented "La Tosca," and on February 16 she produced, for the first time here, Sardou's "Cléopâtre." That was her fifth visit to New York. Her third tour ended at San Francisco on May 1, and on May 2 she sailed from that port for Australia, where she had a successful season. On her return to San Francisco she began her fourth American tour, appearing in that city on September 28. On November 4 she appeared at the Standard Theatre, New York,—beginning her sixth engagement here,—in "Jeanne

From a Photograph by Carvalho, N. Y. *In the Collection of the Author.*

SARAH BERNHARDT
as
Princess Fedora, in "Fedora."

d'Arc." On December 4 she produced, for the first time in this city, "La Dame de Challant," and on December 12 she ended her local engagement. On April 20, 1892, she reappeared in the capital, at the Metropolitan Opera House, performing as *Leah,* in a French version of a play long known to our Stage as "Leah the Forsaken,"—an adaptation (by Augustin Daly) of Herr Mosenthal's "Deborah." That was her seventh visit to New York. Her fifth American tour and her eighth New York engagement began on January 20, 1896, at Abbey's Theatre, now (1912) called the Knickerbocker, with the play of "Izeyl," and during that engagement, which lasted until February 24, she presented also "La Dame aux Camélias," "La Tosca," "Magda," and "Gismonda." On May 16 she began her ninth New York engagement, and in the course of it she acted in "Izeyl," "Gismonda," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," "La Tosca," "La Dame aux Camélias," and "La Femme de Claude." That engagement and her fifth American tour ended on May 22. On November 20, 1900, she arrived in New York, to begin her sixth tour, which was made in association with the eminent French comedian Benoit-Constant Coquelin. The season began on November 26, 1900, at the Garden Theatre, with "L'Aiglon," and during that engagement Mme. Bernhardt perpetrated, on December 25, her dreadful desecration of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* The tour ended on April 29, and on April 30, 1901, the French players

sailed for France. Mme. Bernhardt's seventh American tour began in November, 1905, at Chicago, and, in the course of it, the attitude assumed by the New York Theatrical Syndicate forced her, while traversing a part of the South, to act in a circus tent. That tour ended, at the Lyric Theatre, New York, on June 13, 1906, and the next day Mme. Bernhardt sailed for France.

On October 31, 1910, Mme. Bernhardt began her eighth American tour, at the Studebaker Theatre, Chicago, acting *Reichstadt,* in "L'Aiglon," and on December 5, that year, at the Globe Theatre, her fifteenth New York engagement. Her repertory in America in 1910-'11 comprised "L'Aiglon," "La Dame aux Camélias," "La Tosca," "La Femme X," "Sapho," "Jeanne d'Arc," "La Samaritaine," "Judas," and "Phèdre." "Judas" was not acted in New York, but its presentation in Philadelphia caused much clerical colic. Of that repertory the most important feature was the drama, by M. Alexandre Bisson, called "La Femme X," made known in this country about a year earlier under the name of "Madame X." On June 21, 1911, Mme. Bernhardt ended her latest American tour, and on June 22 departed for France. Since the time when she was last seen in America she has added several new plays to her repertory—notably "Faust," in which she has appeared as *Mephistopheles.*

Almost from the beginning the story of Sarah Bern-

hardt's life is one of continual conflict, incessant activity, achievement, travel, resolute endurance, and persistent endeavor. She has never faltered and she has never recognized failure. Her most admirable quality, indeed, has ever been that of resolution. The extraordinary courage, fortitude, tenacity of purpose, and continuance of labor that she has exhibited have, naturally, aroused admiration, and that admiration is well deserved. The example of the eminent actress, in that respect, is inspiring and worthy of ardent emulation. But the example is not so exceptional as to warrant the volume of superlative adjectives that has been employed in the celebration of it. Mme. Bernhardt has learned new words and presented old variations of the same character under new names, but in fifteen or twenty years she has shown, in America, only one new phase of character,—*Reichstadt,* in "L'Aiglon." She is by no means alone in the ability to act well, in age, the parts requiring the spirit and the semblance of youth. Longevity is usual among actors. Mme. Bernhardt's repertory,—all told, about 130 parts,—will not bear comparison with those of such performers, for example, as John Gilbert, William Warren, and Henry Irving. When last seen here she was about sixty-eight years old. Charles Mathews acted rattling light comedy parts, and acted them better than they have ever been acted since, when he was between seventy and eighty years old. Joseph Jefferson acted *Bob Acres* and *Mr. Golightly* at

seventy-five, and danced the quadrille. Mrs. G. H. Gilbert began her first starring tour when she was more than eighty. George Holland played *Tony Lumpkin,* and sang his barnyard song at seventy-six. In old days the formidable, iron-visaged, iron-bodied veteran Charles Macklin acted the terrific part of *Macbeth, for the first time,* at eighty-two, and continued to act heavy parts until he was past one hundred. It is good, however, to see upon the stage—and everywhere else—indomitable endurance, the aspiring mind that nothing can daunt and the iron will that nothing can break.

Sarah Bernhardt, as an actress, within her natural field, has shown herself to be a wonderful performer. But that natural field, unhappily, is one of morbid eccentricity, and the better its most typical images are presented the less desirable they show themselves of being presented at all. Representative embodiments by this actress are *Frou-Frou, Fédora, Floria, Théodora, Gismonda, Cléopâtre, Magda, Césarine,* in "La Femme de Claude"; *Izeyl,* and *Blanche Marie,* in "La Dame de Challant." No spectator was ever benefited, cheered, encouraged, ennobled, instructed, or even rationally entertained by the prospect of those embodiments, or any one of them, and it is beyond reasonable dispute that the exhibition of them has exerted a deplorable influence. No person acquainted with the subject has ever denied the merits of Mme. Bernhardt's acting: it is the duty of the critical observer to specify and

define them. They are, in brief, the ability to elicit complete and decisive dramatic effect from situations of horror, terror, vehement passion, and mental anguish: neatness in the adjustment of manifold details: evenly sustained continuity: ability to show a woman who seeks to cause physical infatuation and who generally can succeed in doing so; a woman in whom vanity, cruelty, selfishness, and animal propensity are supreme; a woman of formidable, sometimes dangerous, sometimes terrible mental force. The woman of intrinsic grandeur—the woman essentially good and noble—she has not succeeded in portraying. "Nature's above art in that respect." *Queen Katharine* and *Hermione,* for example, are characters beyond her reach. Her inadequacy in this relation was clearly shown by her presentment of *Deborah.* She has never truthfully depicted a woman who truly loves. She never could have given a veritable personation of *Imogen,* or *Viola,* or *Juliet,* or *Rosalind.* Had she possessed the mind to understand and the soul to sympathize with such parts as those, or with such parts as *Mary Stuart* and *Volumnia,* together with the same technical proficiency, at its best, which she has exhibited in a vastly lower order of characters, Sarah Bernhardt would have given performances of superlative excellence, which, in their beneficent influence, would have lived forever. She has, meantime, fulfilled her destiny,—which is the consequence of character operant on circumstances; she

has lived her life, to her utmost capacity: she has left undone nothing which it was in her power to do: she has had a large, if indiscriminate, part of the world at her feet; but when the Great Prompter strikes the bell for the final curtain she will pass and be thought of no more, except as a conspicuous example of eccentric character and brilliant ability. The laurel that is rooted in a bed of horrors soon withers and dies. Her earlier embodiments were, by far, the more valuable of her achievements, but, in study of dramatic art in America, all her principal personations given in this country require consideration.

ADRIENNE AND *TISBÉ.*

The first performance given in America by Sarah Bernhardt was that of *Adrienne Lecouvreur,* in Augustin Eugène Scribe's play, known to our Stage as "Adrienne the Actress." In that character she made a signal impression of unique personality and felicitous art. Many years afterward she made for herself a stage variant of Scribe's play, producing it in Paris, and on the afternoon of December 13, 1905, she presented it at the Lyric Theatre, New York. In both versions her impersonation of *Adrienne* was, substantially, the same, and it dwells in memory as one of the most agreeable and admirable of her many performances. Her alteration of the original drama offered no feature of important novelty and was not an improvement of it.

The play is sixty-three years old. It was acted at the Théâtre Français on April 14, 1849, with Rachel as *Adrienne,* and it was presented by Jean Davenport (Lander), in an English version made by that actress, at the old Broadway Theatre, New York, on December 5, 1853. Rachel, of whom it was truthfully said that "she could play the gentlewoman with perfect ease," gave a charming performance of *Adrienne.* Jean Davenport was correct and effective. The part has been conspicuously presented on our Stage by many performers of exceptional ability,—among them Adelaide Ristori, Marie Seebach (who was supremely fine in it), and Helena Modjeska, that beautiful exponent of romance and pathos.

Mme. Bernhardt's embodiment of *Adrienne* naturally associates itself with her presentment of *Tisbé,* in Victor Hugo's drama generally called "The Actress of Padua," which has been known on our Stage since 1852, when Charlotte Cushman produced it, on May 8, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, and acted *Tisbé.* Mme. Bernhardt produced the original French play before a New York audience on the evening of December 13, 1905, thus directly associating her portrayal of *Tisbé* with her assumption of *Adrienne.* Both those heroines are actresses. Both are lovers; both are opposed by rivals; both are tormented by jealousy; and both miserably perish. The essential difference between them consists in weight, force, and passion. *Adrienne,* capable

of scorn, is, comparatively, tender, sweet, and mild. *Tisbé,* though capable of love, can be ferocious and cruel. *Adrienne* is French, and the mistress of *Maurice de Saxe,*—whom she supposes to be only a poor officer. *Tisbé* is Italian, and a courtesan,—the mistress of the cavalier *Rudolfo. Adrienne's* lover is true. *Tisbé's* lover is false. *Adrienne* publicly insults her powerful rival, the aristocratic *Duchess of Bouillon,* and subsequently dies of poison, concealed in a bouquet sent to her by that *Duchess,* but delivered as the gift of her lover. *Tisbé,* finding that her rival is her benefactor, the one person on earth to whom she owes a sacred debt of gratitude, sacrifices her life to promote her lover's happiness,—artfully and piteously contriving to die by his hand. In each case the story is told with ambling prolixity of preparation, explanation, and comment, not infrequently characteristic of French Drama. The foreground of Scribe's play is arranged with elaborate artifice,—making known that *Adrienne* and *Mlle. Duclos* are stage rivals; that *Mlle. Duclos* is the mistress of the *Duke of Bouillon;* that the *Duchess of Bouillon* has private knowledge of this fact, derived from the actress; that the *Duchess of Bouillon* and *Maurice de Saxe* have been lovers, but that *Maurice* has transferred his heart to *Adrienne,* and that the *Duchess,* instinctively aware of his defection, is intent on discovering the identity of her rival; that *Maurice,* just arrived in Paris, has visited *Adrienne* before visiting the *Duchess,* and has

received a flower from her,—which horticultural token the great lady observes and adroitly captures; and that the *Duke of Bouillon* has begun to surmise that *Mlle. Duclos* is not a trustworthy person; with much additional and various detail.

When the action of "Adrienne" does begin, however, it begins in earnest, and it goes swiftly on. The *Duchess* causes *Mlle. Duclos* to write a letter to the all-conquering *Saxe,* inviting him to a private midnight interview with her, in the little house that the *Duke* has provided for her residence. This letter falls into the hands of the *Duke,* who thereupon invites all the players of the Théâtre Français, including *Adrienne,* to come to supper, at that house, at *Saxe's* appointed hour,—intending to expose and shame his treacherous paramour. The design of the *Duchess* is to be present, personating *Mlle. Duclos* when *Saxe* arrives, to befriend him in monetary matters,—he being impecunious,—and to ascertain the name of her unknown rival: and that plan, except in the last detail, is executed. The arrival of the *Duke* and his player-guests, however, places the *Duchess* in a painful predicament, but from this she is extricated by *Adrienne,* who, in a dark scene, during which the two suspicious and rival sirens strive to recognize each other, liberates her from the house,—the *Duchess* incidentally dropping a bracelet, the gift of her husband, which *Adrienne* secures. Then follows a climacteric scene, at the palace of the *Duchess,* when

that infuriated dame at last discovers her rival, by recognition of the sound of the voice she has heard in the dark; endeavors to mortify and disgrace *Adrienne* before the stately company; and is exposed, defeated, and overwhelmed by the actress, in a recitation, practically applied, of the denunciatory speech from "Phèdre"—branding her enemy as one "who bears a brow insensible to shame." This moment of tempest and fatal triumph is quickly succeeded by the catastrophe of *Adrienne's* death. The opportunity for Mme. Bernhardt's best display of artistic facility and of personal force was that which occurs at the climax, and she was incisive and victorious in her swift ejaculation of the envenomed invective. Her death-scene, likewise, was artistic—because expressive of poignant suffering, neither grossly physical nor too long protracted.

It was in moods of tempest that Mme. Bernhardt put forth her powers with the greater freedom and, technically, the better result. *Tisbé* was more harmonious with her personality than *Adrienne,* and Victor Hugo's play,—implicating more potent elements of romance, passion, tragedy, and terror, and being less a fabric of intrigue and artificial manners than Scribe's,—is much the better of the two; although, indeed, the Theatre is under lasting obligation to Scribe for the beautiful character of *Michonet,* which, in various guises and under various names, has endured ever since he made it.

In Hugo's sinewy drama the action "comes to Hecuba" more quickly than it does in Scribe's lace-ruffle fabric, and it is of a more dread and ghastly order. *Tisbé,* the courtesan, has emerged from a youth of ignominious penury. She remembers that her vagrant mother's life was spared, through the influence of a Senator, at the instigation of a lovely girl, scarcely more than a child; and when, in after years, she discovers that her successful rival in love is the same girl, grown to womanhood and wedded to a tyrant, she is constrained, under harrowing and pitiful circumstances, to prove her gratitude by giving both life and love.

The plot of "Tisbé" is intricate, but the evolution of it creates a brisk succession of surprising effects. *Angelo, Lord of Padua,* has wedded *Catarina,* whom he no longer loves, and by whom he is feared. *Catarina* loves *Rudolfo,* and by him is loved, but they have only casually met, and they know each other little, if at all. *Tisbé* is infatuated with *Rudolfo,* and has become his paramour. *Angelo* is wishful to engross the love of *Tisbé.* (The morals of all these persons, obviously, require camphor,—but that fact need not detain attention. Victor Hugo used strong measures in his accomplishment of romantic effect.) There is a mysterious person named *Homodei,* who moves all these characters as though they were puppets,—pretending that his motive is gratitude, whereas he is prompted by malevolence, because *Catarina* has repulsed his amatory

advances. There comes a time when *Tisbé,* who has beguiled *Angelo* of a key to his private rooms, is enabled to confront her rival, in the night, at a moment when the amorous *Rudolfo* has just been concealed in the lady's oratory; and thereupon ensues a colloquy of the most dramatic order, compounded of scorn, ridicule, sarcasm, and vituperation on the one hand, and supreme terror on the other,—a swift alternation of thrust and moan, which is suddenly arrested and converted into consternation and dismay, when, beholding a certain crucifix, *Tisbé* becomes aware of *Catarina's* identity with the lovely child-benefactor of her early days. It is historic that this passage was wonderfully illumined by Mlle. Mars and, later, by Rachel: and it should be recorded and remembered that Sarah Bernhardt created a magnificent effect with it. Rachel's famous action, at "The lamp *still* smokes!" is remembered as the perfection of icy sarcasm. Bernhardt did not make that point; but her treatment of the scene was the consummate expression of cruel contempt and concentrated, jealous fury. The authority with which, partly because of her formidable character and partly because of her ample experience and her copious faculty of expression, she dominated the stage was contributory to an impressive effect of propulsion, as of weird and sinister destiny, throughout the closing scene,—wherein *Catarina* is rescued, by *Tisbé,* from the death decreed by the jealous *Angelo,* and *Tisbé,* by permitting *Rudolfo* to

believe that she has poisoned *Catarina,* successfully tempts him to stab her to the heart. Bernhardt's impersonation of *Tisbé* is remembered as having shown about all the power of which, in her latter professional life, she was capable. It was the more impressive because completely free from a disagreeable affectation of gushing youth which she had begun to exhibit, and because it was fraught with a certain massive substance of character and distinguished by a spirit of self-control and commanding authority appropriate to a veteran.

"FROU-FROU."

In execution Bernhardt's performance of *Gilberte,* called *Frou-Frou,* in the play entitled "Frou-Frou," by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, was one of the most expert, sparkling, and effective achievements of "natural" acting ever shown on our Stage. The ethical drift of the play is pernicious to morality and obnoxious to good judgment and good taste, because, by implication, it sets in favor of folly and in palliation of vice. Misconduct is extenuated and a weak, volatile character is invested with alluring charm. The construction of the play is exceptionally clever, but the influence of it, sentimentally clouding the distinction between right and wrong, is mischievous. Bitter disappointment and piteous death are, indeed, shown to be the consequences of *Gilberte's* revolt from virtue; nevertheless, it is

Gilberte, in her misconduct, who engrosses sympathy and captures approbation.

Bernhardt's first performance of that part in America was given at Booth's Theatre, on November 10, 1880, and then and for some time afterward her acting of it was charming. In later years, when she could no longer be girlish, she wisely discarded it. Her *Frou-Frou* was all that the phrase implies, a perfect image of winning prettiness, unconscious coquetry, and exquisite, if irrational, sensibility, a passionate woman and at the same time a fascinating child. The spirit was pure; the expression apparently spontaneous; the method simple; the loveliness piquant, not insipid; and the personation consistently graceful. Bernhardt's mechanism, in every part that she acted, was really elaborate, but in acting *Frou-Frou* she completely concealed it, except to the closest and coldest scrutiny. Her stage business was superbly effective,—as in the passionate, resentful, impulsive action of brushing from her cheek the kiss of her sister *Louise,* and the restrained, growing anger with which she listened to her sister's remonstrance, all the while unconsciously tearing away, piece by piece, the tasselled fringes of the sofa on which she was sitting. Her fiery, voluble utterance of jealous rage when at last she seemed to lose all control of herself (without ever losing it) and fully liberated the storm of passion which thrilled her slender, delicate, fragile person was as splendid, whether viewed

as expression of human nature or illustration of proficiency in acting, as any professional exploit of hers in the whole of her long career. Her acting in the Death Scene was pathetic in its fidelity to nature, yet never once marred by the literal touch which so often makes death scenes offensive on the stage. It was in her showing of the sweetly capricious quality of the character, however,—the *Frou-Frou* attribute,—that the actress was supremely fine. A continual succession of many-colored lights seemed to ripple over the exquisite texture of that pretty, wilful, winning, fleeting image of child-like womanhood.

"LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS."

The comedian William Warren sometimes told a story of an old farmer in New England whose wife had been for many years an invalid, and of whom inquiry was made as to her condition. "She's sick," he said, "an' she's been sick a long time. I wish she'd get well, or—or—or—somethin'." A kindred aspiration has long been felt because of the continual recurrence of the consumptive French courtesan, *Marguerite Gauthier*, known to the English-speaking audience as *Camille*. That hectic and calorific female, who has been lingering at the point of death for more than half a century, was trotted out with inevitable certainty whenever Mme. Bernhardt came upon the scene. Her first American performance of that part was given at Booth's Theatre,

New York, on November 15, 1880, and later the representation was made familiar throughout the land.

The assumption in this play is that *Camille's* vicious way of living has been caused by enforcing circumstances, not by depravity; that she is made to recognize that her continued liaison with a youth who is a member of a reputable family will cause trouble to that family and to him; that she becomes persuaded her lover will, by and by, grow weary of her society, and that they can have no enduring happiness together, and that she thereupon makes a fruitless sacrifice of herself,—deserting her paramour for his presumable benefit, and dying miserably, of consumption accelerated by sorrow. The substance of the impartment is a declaration that the Erring Sister, however much she may have deviated into vice, can remain capable of "love" and can exemplify the sublimity of renunciation. Sarah Bernhardt's representation of *Camille* at least made her, artistically, clean. The actress revealed herself, from the first, as a woman of strong intellectual character: as an artist she was above the medicine-chest and the slop-bowl: the chief merits of her performance of the French courtesan in failing health were refinement of method and good taste. The subject is coarse: her treatment of it comprehended personal reticence. There was no reek of the medical dispensary or the brothel. The simulation of emotion in it was sympathetic and persuasive,—especially in the colloquy with that conven-

tional, wooden-headed don, the elder *Duval*. *Camille's* eloquent play of feature as she reads the resentful letter of *Armand* was wonderfully effective—but Mme. Bernhardt appropriated that "business" from Modjeska, whose embodiment of *Marguerite Gauthier* she had seen in Paris, before coming to America, and whose treatment of that situation was even more beautiful than Mme. Bernhardt's was. The demeanor of Mme. Bernhardt's *Camille,* in the explosive scene with the belligerent *Armand,* was hysterical and agonized, and the simulation of death-bed sufferings and the ecstasy of dissolution were refined and pathetic.

Mme. Bernhardt, however, could never convincingly represent a woman who, in the true meaning of the word, *loves*. Signs of a disturbance in a frivolous nature, which were intended to signify love, were sometimes made discernible by her, but they deceived only the juvenile or the inordinately susceptible and credulous spectator. For the close observer there was something comic in the proceedings of that formidable, hard, expert old stager, as she went through the motions at the end of the First Act of "Camille,"—posturing, purring, and murmuring "l'amour! l'aa-moo-ur!" Her superlative excellence was her stage machinery,—always of rare workmanship and almost always in beautiful order. Her chief fault as an artist was prolixity; being enraptured with herself, upon all occasions, she was sometimes willing to linger over details and thus

consume oceans of time; but it is the nature of a peacock to strut upon the garden wall and spread his glittering plumage in the sunshine, and often the spectator's gaze dwells delightedly on his refulgent colors. Some persons, furthermore, like to hear his screech. The late Lord Beaconsfield, for instance, liked it, and he kept many specimens of that radiant fowl at Hughenden.

There is one word that ought to be said as often as particular reference to the sophisticated play of "La Dame aux Camélias" becomes essential. The central character which it presents, *Marguerite Gauthier,* is not representative but highly exceptional, and, therefore, not illustrative, and not pertinent, in consideration of the question that is inevitably suggested by the play in which she figures. The vice of unchastity vulgarizes and degrades its victims, whichever their sex, even when they start from an average condition of virtue. Most of the females who voluntarily lead vicious lives appear to do so because they are, by nature, coarse and low, and because they prefer evil. The exceptional woman,—the woman of pure aspiration whose nature is vitiated by surrender to fiery and ungovernable passions, and whose life is thus blasted,—even at the worst of her frailty, may retain the original fibre of fine character and may prove capable of heroism. Nobody who knows human nature has any doubt of that fact, and nobody possessed of even average humanity denies that, as to all sinful persons, the great and sacred virtue of charity imposes

a solemn duty. But this is a theme that ought not to be obtruded in a theatre,—where specious moral platitudes, made for the purpose of introducing an indelicate subject, are almost as gross and quite as offensive as indecent pictures. The play of "Camille" ought to be "quietly inurned." It leads to no good: it imparts no benefit: it is radically unhealthful: it tends to confuse, in many minds, the perceptions of right and wrong and of individual responsibility: the better it is acted the more certainly it becomes pernicious: and, for those reasons, production of it is radically immoral.

"PHÈDRE."

Readers of ancient Greek literature are, of course, acquainted with the story of *Phædra* and *Hippolytus,* as told by Euripides, in his prosy, argumentative, and grimly horrible drama on that subject. Racine's tragedy, a French variant of the Greek original, tells the same story, with a considerable difference as to some of its details, but with no essential difference as to its central plan. *Phèdre* is the stepmother of *Hippolyte,* and, in the absence of her husband, *Théseus,* who is supposed to be dead, she avows to her stepson a sensual passion for him, with which she is consumed, and, being repulsed by that continent youth, she falsely and basely informs the returned *Théseus* that his son has endeavored to seduce her,—thereby causing direful complications and illimitable

anguish. At the last she goes mad, with remorse, but she is sufficiently rational to confess her criminal falsehood, and she swallows poison and dies. In the Greek play she hangs herself. In both plays she is, essentially, the same abnormal, deplorable wretch,—the vital image of a terrific struggle between vice and virtue, animal passion and the sense of rectitude, low desire, and self-contempt. "The great Racine," ponderous but celestial, has placed her in many afflicting situations, and has supplied her, and likewise her associates, with many long speeches. Her agonies are excruciating and incessant,—not, however, at any time mitigative of her loquacity. Human suffering, as a rule,—and always with great natures,—is silent. The woe of *Phèdre* is garrulous—as befits an invalid: for no magic, even of the divine Racine's most angelic alexandrines, can take this part out of the category of the sick. In such cases as that of *Phèdre* the obvious remedy is not versification, but *potassii bromidum*,—a sovereign anaphrodisiac; and a great pity it is that this palliative could not have been administered to the suffering female, at the beginning of her troubles!

There is a poetic way of exalting the character of *Phèdre*,—namely, reversion to the Greek ideal, and assumption that she is a noble woman, whom the goddess Aphrodite,—that offended deity,—has determined to destroy, and who precipitates herself upon her ruin because of celestial propulsion. The part was greatly

played by Rachel, and each successor to that illustrious actress has seemed to recognize a necessity of emulating her example in it. *Phèdre* was included in the repertory of Matilda Heron, and also in those of Ristori, Seebach, Janauschek, and Modjeska. The stage has long been acquainted with it but the public, happily, has seldom been compelled to endure it. Sarah Bernhardt played it because Rachel did and because her towering ambition and restless spirit courted every ordeal of difficulty. It cannot reasonably be deemed that she chose *Phèdre* because the character was either suited to her nature or fitted to display the essential attributes of her art—for she was not like it and she was not free in it. The adequate representative of *Phèdre* must possess at least two attributes, in abundance, which the acting of Sarah Bernhardt never showed: majesty and tenderness. Apprehended according to the tradition of Rachel, taste recognizes in *Phèdre* a lofty ideal of majestic womanhood forced by fate to yield itself to a consuming passion; to suffer agonies of self-contempt and remorse for that degrading, irresistible sin; and at last to expiate its offence against itself, and against ideal purity, by self-destruction. In dramatic presentation it can be redeemed only by a temperament and a method of acting that place great emphasis on spiritual remorse and lift the personality far above actual life.

Sarah Bernhardt did not so redeem it, but applied

to that character the passion of *Camille* with the method of *Adrienne*—the "natural" style, in other words, to a subject entirely unnatural, a piece designedly conceived and written in close imitation of the Greek form. "Impassive, stilted and sententious" are the adjectives that Alexandre Dumas employed to describe the classic drama of France, and they describe it well. That particular specimen of it is the last work that judicious taste would think of selecting for a natural, modern, familiar interpretation. *Phèdre* should be the white marble statue, veined with golden fire; not the glittering Parisian belle. Mme. Bernhardt accomplished all that could be done by a woman whose destiny it was,—speaking of destiny as the consequence of character,—to fascinate but not to be fascinated. The best of her art was the expression of terrible passion. She revealed the ravaged condition of *Phèdre's* mind at the outset, and thus at once she excited pity, while deftly preparing the way for the agonizing culmination of her deplorable experience. But she never attained to majesty; she but dimly gave the idea of an impelling, inexorable fate; and there was more love of self than of anybody else in her attempted portraiture of the operation of love. The most startling moment in the embodiment was that in which *Phèdre's* frenzy precipitates the disclosure of her fatal secret to *Hippolyte*. The alternations of self-pitying lamentation with explosive protest were made with intense power,

and Mme. Bernhardt produced a thrilling effect with her maddened, despairing utterance of the accession of jealousy to the anguish already so terrible. It could not be doubted that every phase of *Phèdre's* suffering was, at least, recognized by her through feminine intuition: nevertheless, her embodiment of *Phèdre* was essentially a failure because of its lack not only of majesty and tenderness, but of spiritual remorse.

The play affords few inherently dramatic situations. The action,—if it can be so designated,—is of the kind that passes within the breast,—a strife of strong passions in conflict,—inducing copious soliloquy and conversation, much of which is tedious. Although at many points in the performance the play of her voice was enchanting with sweetness and impressive with eloquence, Mme. Bernhardt was at times monotonous and lachrymose in her recital of the rhymed anguish of Racine,—"monotony in wire," as Byron styles it. Her strength—although it was reserved with skill—did not suffice to sustain her throughout the fearful struggle and the long-drawn vociferations that mainly compose the tragedy. The moments of her action that linger pleasantly in memory are those in which—lapsing into involuntary dreaminess—*Phèdre* murmured sensuous delight in fulfilled passion. At other fortunate points in the representation she impressed most deeply by the attitude and countenance of strained nervous concentration. Her appearance was picturesque. She wore

white robes embroidered with gold,—no other color,—and she looked the personification of haggard, wasting misery. The morbid part of *Phèdre* was conveyed by her as fully and as truly as could be wished; but the heart was left out of the ideal, the tone of the mechanism was lowered by excess of over-"natural" treatment, and the method was as inappropriate to the subject as would be the employment of a piccolo for a performance of the Dead March in "Saul."

"FÉDORA."

The drama of "Fédora," by Victorien Sardou, was written expressly for Mme. Bernhardt, and, manifestly, it was the purpose of the expert dramatist, in delineating the heroine, the *Princess Fédora,* to fashion such a character as would conform to all the peculiarities of the actress, physical and temperamental, awaken her natural sympathy, evoke all the resources of her art, and elicit expression of all her powers. He perfectly understood his subject and he fully accomplished his purpose. The play proved a complete vehicle for the effective display of Mme. Bernhardt's personality and of her peculiar talents and her artistic method. Sardou's play was indebted for at least suggestion to a play called "Le Drame de la Rue de la Paix," by Adolphe Belot, produced at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, Paris, in 1869, with Mme. Bernhardt as the heroine, *Mme. Vidal.* The drama of "Fédora" was first produced, in America,

at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, New York, on October 1, 1883, with Fanny Davenport as *Fédora.* On that occasion Robert Mantell, who has since risen to eminence as a Shakespearean actor, made the first signal, decisive hit of his career, playing *Loris Ipanoff.* Mme. Bernhardt, who had won great success in Paris as *Fédora,* acted the part for the first time in New York, at the old Star Theatre, on March 14, 1887.

The distinguishing characteristic of this drama is carnality. The tide never rises in it above the level of the senses and the morbid emotions. Almost it exhales rankness like that of a menagerie. This, in brief, is the story: The *Princess Fédora,* a Russian widow of high rank and much wealth, is about to marry *Captain Vladimir Yariskine,* son of the newly appointed and brutally severe *Prefect of Police* of St. Petersburg. Her affianced husband is brought home, from a house in the outskirts of that city, mortally wounded, and he dies, without regaining consciousness. His death is ascribed to Nihilist conspirators, and suspicion falls upon one *Loris Ipanoff* as the perpetrator of the murder. An attempt is made to arrest *Ipanoff,* but it is found that he has fled to Paris. Thither he is presently followed by *Fédora,* who, in a fury of revengeful hatred, has undertaken to elicit a confession from him and surreptitiously to secure his arrest and his return to Russia and an ignominious death. She easily fascinates *Ipanoff,* but in doing so she

enkindles a reciprocal passion in her own bosom. She obtains from *Ipanoff* a declaration of his identity with the slayer of *Yariskine.* She appoints a meeting with him, in her residence, at night. She then denounces his brother to the Russian police, as an accomplice in the murder,—and she arranges that *Loris Ipanoff* shall be seized and kidnapped by Russian police as he leaves her dwelling. Seeking to ascertain from *Loris* why he had become a Nihilist, she learns that he has never joined that faction, but that he has killed *Yariskine* in vengeance for that person's seduction of his wife, *Vanda.* This charge he substantiates by producing the letters of *Yariskine* written to *Vanda. Fédora's* love for the dead man is thereupon turned to hate,—and her passion for *Loris* is intensified. He must not be allowed to leave her house, as he will thus go to his death, and he is detained all night, by sacrifice of her chastity. Her denunciation of the brother of *Loris* results in the death of that youth and of the mother of the *Ipanoff* brothers, and *Fédora,* in an agony of despair, at the certainty of losing the love of her paramour when he shall have discovered that she has caused their deaths, commits suicide, by swallowing poison, and dies in her lover's arms.

In the delineation of *Fédora*—a descendant of the Cantacuzenes, a person whose temper is so fierce that she causes a sailor who disobeys her on board of her yacht to be cast from that vessel into the sea—the

dramatist laid great stress upon the feline elements. She loves, but it is as a leopard may be supposed to love, and she hates in the same way. *Vladimir* has been the object of her devoted attachment, and the murder of him inspires her vindictive hate. Yet, in less than two months, she becomes infatuated with *Loris,* a man who has been devoted to his wife, *Vanda,* yet one who, in less than two months after her death, becomes the carnal idolater of the physical charms of *Fédora.* The spectators of Mme. Bernhardt's performance of that *Princess* found themselves in the presence of a tiger-woman. The embodiment possessed every attribute of the fierce, dangerous, fascinating yet horrible beauty signified by that phrase. She evinced no tenderness, but her fiery, scorching ardor and her intensely vital, impulsive, passionate, erratic personality comported with the character of *Fédora,* and therefore her performance was excellent. She was lurid, portentous, sinister—a brilliant combination of seductive guile, dangerous menace, and deadly enmity. The moment in which *Fédora* tempts her lover and saves him at the sacrifice of her chastity, presented Sarah Bernhardt in the perfection of her artistic skill and the amplest revelation of her peculiar temperament.

An observer looking beneath the surface of acting, in quest of any benefit resultant from it, could never have found a response in that performance. Personal fascination, grace of movement, persuasive vocal-

ism, instant adaptation to quick changes of mood, a magic of radiant glances, a fine gypsy air of freedom,—always so effective!—united in a glittering process of dramatic art and formed a victorious performance. But it is not by technical excellence in acting that the liveliest interest is aroused and the mind satisfied and refreshed. Each wonderful person who appears in the world of art becomes *admirable* to mankind only as a living evidence of the possible greatness inherent in humanity. In dramatic art, even at its best, there is no potency of benefit extending beyond a satisfaction of the sense of felicitous expression. If the art is not informed by a great spirit, it goes not beyond the present instant, and, practically, it is dead. No spectator of her performances was ever exalted, ever ennobled in mind or elated in spirit from seeing the acting of Sarah Bernhardt,—least of all in *Fédora.*

"THÉODORA."

The drama of "Théodora" was first produced at the Théâtre Porte Saint-Martin, under the management of Duquesnel, on December 27, 1884,—Mme. Bernhardt, for whose use it had been expressly prepared, appearing as its heroine. It was first produced in America at Niblo's Garden, New York, on September 13, 1886, with a crude, amateurish performer, Miss Lillian Olcott, as *Théodora,* and that fine actor J. H. Gilmour as *Andreas.* Mme. Bernhardt made her American

advent in the piece at the Star Theatre, New York, on March 28, 1887. The play is the recital of a carnal intrigue conducted by *Théodora,* wife of the *Emperor Justinian,* which is attended by incidents of strife, peril, and murder, culminates in detection, and terminates in a violent and hideous death. The story is odoriferous of carnage, cruelty, and lust. The choice of time, place, persons, and adjuncts gives occasion for an exceedingly picturesque stage-setting and for magnificence of pageantry in the presentation of the play. Also, as will instantly occur to readers of Gibbon, it invokes attention to a period and background of exceptional horror.

Théodora, from being a lewd performer in a circus, there known as *Zoé,* has become the wife of *Justinian,* and has risen to be joint ruler of the Roman Empire. Wearied by satiety and hating her husband, *Théodora,* representing herself to be a young widow, named *Myrta,* enters into an amatory intrigue with an Athenian youth, named *Andreas.* An attempt to murder *Justinian,* made by *Andreas* and his friends, is frustrated: *Marcellus,* the comrade of *Andreas,* is captured, and *Théodora,* in order to prevent his implication of *Andreas* under an ordeal of torture, murders *Marcellus* by stabbing him through the heart. The identity of *Myrta* with *Théodora* is ascertained by *Andreas,* who accuses her of having betrayed him and his friends to *Justinian. Théodora,* thinking to regain the love

of *Andreas* by means of a magic love philter secured from an old Egyptian sorceress, *Tamyris,* causes him to swallow a draught containing that liquor, which causes his agonized death—*Tamyris,* supposing the desired love philter to be intended by *Théodora* for *Justinian,* having substituted a deadly poison for the amatory provocative. *Justinian,* having discovered *Théodora's* intrigue with *Andreas* and suspecting her of having instigated a popular uprising against him, decrees her death. The *Imperial Executioner,* finding the *Empress* upon the body of her slain lover, proceeds to terminate her lawless life by the hideous process of strangulation, with a silken cord. The chief persons implicated in the piece are loathsome, while the subsidiaries, aside from the atrocity of their conduct, are commonplace. One of the most effective scenes, for theatrical purposes, that have been set on the stage in modern drama is that of a colloquy between *Andreas* and the supposed *Myrta,* in which he denounces *Théodora* in such brutal words that *Myrta* is at last stung into a verbal defence of the *Empress,* from which she lapses into siren-like beguilement of the bellicose lover and rebel,—one of those patriots who talk with amazing powers of continuity.

Mme. Bernhardt's portrayal of *Théodora* was one of the most representative and most obnoxious of all her many unpleasant or revolting impersonations. It would be difficult to imagine a character that com-

bines attributes of a more hateful description than those which are blended in *Théodora*. The essential fibres of that person are vanity and selfishness. Around those are crystallized craft, sensuality, duplicity, cruelty, haughty insolence, and flippant recklessness. That compound, incarnated in a supple and beautiful physique, is supposed to be redeemed by fierce courage, indomitable determination, a resolute will, and signal capacity for the administration of public affairs. The point upon which the dramatist more particularly relies for the artistic redemption of that wicked woman is her capacity for sincerity in a sexual attachment. Once, at least, she loves, in her tiger-like fashion, and,—as if that were at all extraordinary or in the least palliative of moral deformity,—the observer is, apparently, expected to admire her on that account. Mme. Bernhardt expressed the opinion that "Théodora" is "grand" and "beautiful,"—affording great opportunities for the actor and for stage effect. That is more or less a question of taste. There really is something higher and finer in life than the sexual love of a wanton stage-heroine and the perturbation attendant upon her career of vice and crime. It is true, however, that, after a languid and prolix opening, the play begins to present situations which are both pictorial and dramatic. No one but a devotee of the personality of Mme. Bernhardt could fail to be bored by the first two acts, and no one but an actress profoundly saturated with self-

complacency could linger upon their trivial details with anything like Mme. Bernhardt's deliberation. The couch business, the reception of *Belisarius,* the visit to the menagerie, the quest of the love philter, the fooling with the wild beasts—all was slow and dull; but at many points in the course of the later acts the actress loosed her fiery impetuosity, making successive situations of passion and of peril luminous and eloquent. No one could better express than she did the mood and the magic of Delilah, in the scene of her lover's subjugation. The defiance of the *Emperor* was an electrical moment. The celerity of her despatch of the captured accomplice, whom she stabs to the heart with a bodkin caught suddenly out of her hair, was superb in its dramatic fitness. Few stage visions have been seen of such imperial magnificence as she incarnated in *Théodora's* procession to the throne and her assumption of royal state beside her consort. Mme. Bernhardt had not at any time exhibited such tragic power as she displayed in bringing the emotion of the *Empress* to the climax of the fatal catastrophe—the death of *Andreas.* The Menagerie Scene was not marred by the introduction of actual beasts. The raiment worn by Mme. Bernhardt, as *Théodora,* was opulent and gorgeous; but the expressive suitability of the dresses,—as denoted, for instance, by the snake-sleeves worn in the circus,—was more remarkable and more praiseworthy than their costly beauty. It cannot be said too strongly

that the essential illusion of the drama was created and sustained by the actress, not less through identification with the character than by artistic skill and the expert appliance of ingenious accessories. She got inside of the character and lived in it, and she made you feel that this was true: but, when all is said, you had only seen a beautiful beast. To what extent that does you any good, to what extent it is worth while, you must determine for yourself. Fashions are mutable. It is not delirium or eccentricity that refreshes or endures.

"CLÉOPÂTRE."

With reference to most persons who appear upon the stage it may be surmised that they are well contented with themselves, because if they were not they would shrink from the public attention instead of seeking it. That complacency, no doubt, is an amiable weakness. Nobody complains of it. The public, which often is pleased and sometimes is benefited by the ministrations of actors, has no reason to object to it. Yet that complacency, which has its pleasant side, has also its comic side and its painful side. The latter aspects of it were generally illustrated in the professional proceedings of Sarah Bernhardt, and particularly when, emerging in the character of Sardou's *Cléopâtre,* she again claimed for herself the admiring attention of the public, and again sought to substantiate that claim by presenting yet another type of egregious vanity and

morbid folly. In *Cléopâtre,* precisely as in *Tosca,* the accomplished French actress displayed herself, her faculties, and her peculiarities with liberal prodigality, and with abundant and often admirable technical skill; but the chief impression that she conveyed and the essential drift of thought that she stimulated were philosophic rather than professional. There may be persons to whom the stage embodiment of a licentious and ferocious female is impressive and delightful,—a thing worthy to be achieved and desirable to be seen: it was noticed by the philosopher Locke that the world has people of all sorts: but for a sane and thoughtful observer the impression left by Bernhardt's performance of *Cléopâtre* was an impression of regret that a woman so clever should make herself so trivial, and that an actress of so much talent should not be able to find a better use for her powers than the paltry and ignominious employment of presenting an ideal of womanhood which degrades it to the level of the tiger and the ape. For this discrepancy there can be but one cause. The statement of it goes to the root of the subject of Bernhardt's acting. The mental constitution of the actress is devoid of greatness, and, while her temperament is dramatic and her executive faculties are extraordinary, the animating spirit, the individuality, is frivolous. The line upon which she walks is the line to which nature has restricted her.

No impulse other than that of colossal vanity would

prompt, or would permit, any woman to come into the public view in such a character as that of Sardou's *Cléopâtre.* The part has not one fibre of nobility to exalt it, or one touch of poetry to beautify it, or one thrill of heroism to redeem it. In the character of *Cleopatra* which has commonly been known on the English Stage,—the character as drawn by Shakespeare, —there is a tremendous animal appetite; but also there are splendid commingled qualities of heart, mind, and imagination. That great poet did not seek to concentrate attention simply upon an erotic fool. He magnified his historic original and invested it with a glory that in actual life it never possessed. Sardou's *Cléopâtre,* on the contrary, is the futile incarnation of vain, voluptuous wantonness,—the sleek, supple sensuality of the cat, together with its crafty vigilance, its selfish caprice, its treacherous spite, and its pitiless ferocity. Seeing that personage, you saw womanhood at its worst. On every side of the picture the limit was the carnal limit. No great word was spoken, no great action performed, no high impulse indicated, no sweet or fine feeling was entertained in the piece or awakened in the auditor. Effrontery and depravity, sprinkled over with gewgaws, made up the sum of the matter. An unchaste and unprincipled woman, successful by means of her physical fascination, was depicted as triumphant over an infatuated man, old enough to be wise, but not strong enough to act according to his knowledge. That

is the substance of Sardou's drama. The bog of sensuality is opened before you, and upon that you are desired to gaze and moralize. You behold a Parisian tableau of *Samson* and *Delilah,* decked in Roman and Egyptian garments, and you watch the process of subjugation of a man by a woman. Man and woman are alike ordinary. There is nothing splendid about them except their furniture and their raiment. There is nothing great about them except their conceit. At first they are at a feast, and presently they agree to part for a while, and then *Cléopâtre,* who has become physically enamoured of her burly captive, is seen to be longing for him and to trample on a bearer of the ill news of his marriage. A little later you observe her jealous fury when she sees her errant lover in the companionship of another woman, and you listen to her insane invocation that a tempest may burst forth and waste the universe. Presently she is again in possession of her plaything; and then she ruins him as a soldier in order to show her power over him as an animal. Last of all, you see her application of an actual reptile to her person—and the silly spectacle is ended.

All this while your mind has never once been liberated from the confines of a dismal treatise on the low instincts of human nature and the mean aspects of human conduct. You have seen an experienced actress represent, with absolute fidelity, a modern French coquette

bedizened to look like something that is supposed to be Egyptian; but neither in the historic nor in the dramatic point of view has anything been gained. You are neither correctly informed, nor nobly agitated, nor finely impressed. The story of Antony and Cleopatra as it is told in Sardou's piece is not the authentic account of them that may be read in Plutarch, but a garbled version of it. The only effective dramatic passage in the play is one that, obviously, was suggested by a familiar and better passage in Shakespeare—the scene which, probably, Shakespeare based on Plutarch's narrative of Cleopatra's assault on Seleucus. And, finally, *Antony* and *Cleopatra,*—characters that Shakespeare's glorious imagination and splendid treatment have sublimated and half redeemed, —are made, by the French author, to be trivial, vapid, and base; a pair of modern story-paper lovers, solicitous for nothing but their conjunctive loves, and, to any person having a proper comprehension of the dignity of human life, a vulgar and wearisome impertinence.

It is not material that Bernhardt dressed the wanton, expeditious, and tumultuous *Cléopâtre* in gorgeous raiment and embodied her with theatrical skill. That much, at least, was to have been expected of an old and experienced actress, and it would be strange, indeed, if she had not been able to present in an effective manner a part so simple as that of the posturing, picture-making heroine of a spectacle-drama.

Effective although it was, however, her performance of *Cléopâtre,* in one aspect of it, could not escape being comic. A woman must be exceedingly beautiful, and, —more than beautiful,—she must be poetically enchanting, if she would cause such a character as Sardou's *Cléopâtre* to be accepted seriously. Such a woman, in appearance, as Mrs. Rousby or Adelaide Neilson might have made that part potential, by the intoxicating charm of personal loveliness. Sarah Bernhardt, although a woman of striking physiognomy, great nervous vitality, insinuating ways, and, above all, a wonderfully clear, flexible, melodious, penetrating, and expressive voice, cannot be said distinctively to have possessed beauty or the quality of enchantment. During the whole of her almost interminable performance of *Cléopâtre* there was not one instant when any rational observer could forget that she was working the wires of professional machinery. Those wires were worked exceedingly well by her, for she was always graceful and generally adroit; but, except to the eyes of inexperience, or of mistaken enthusiasm, or of servile idolatry, they created no illusion; and as you contemplated the well-managed, seductive blandishments and sinuous gyrations, the concentrated furies and the explosive ebullitions of the expert and facile performer, the idea was never far from your amused thought of a middle-aged lady, blessed with a grown-up family, who roamed up and down the world to smirk, to

bridle, to purr, to posture, to curvet, and to tantalize, and thus to show to theatrical audiences the regulation behavior of a Cyprian when she wishes to turn a man into a fool. She was not nearly as impressive in "Cléopâtre," however, as she was in "La Tosca"—one reason, perhaps, being that the former play is not as strong as the latter. The most of Sardou's "Cléopâtre" is pageantry. When the piece was shown in Paris local newspapers said that it was "a play for exportation," and they could not well have expressed their contempt for it, and for the folly of provincial American adulation, in more significant words. The pervading technical defect of Bernhardt's acting in it flowed from obvious artifice. That defect was metallic insincerity of feeling blended with saccharine monotony of expression.

"IZEYL."

Bernhardt reappeared at Abbey's Theatre, New York, on January 20, 1896, leading in the well-known animal that, wearing various guises and designated by different names, constituted her dramatic menagerie. On that occasion the creature was called *Izeyl,* and it flaunted the luxurious trappings of pleasure, and capered nimbly in the Far East. *Izeyl,* of course, was a courtesan. Dramatic genius, in order that it can be completely effective, must have free play, and it is never so limber as when it presents a female who is glorified by filthy vice. *Izeyl* had never seen the man who did not incon-

tinently surrender to her charms, and, accordingly, when she heard of a male being who preferred religion to "love," she became inflated with a noble scorn, proclaimed the instant subjugation of that presumptuous monster, pursued him into the woods, crawled all over his person, and, to her amazement and disgust, found him torpid; and thereupon she was turned to virtue, so that when the usual masculine weakling next came along, and proffered the usual boon of his devotion, she promptly stuck a knife into his gizzard and thus pacified him. For that unexpected and peculiar, though efficacious and final, commentary on "love" she was subjected to fatal tortures; but, just before her demise, she was consoled by an assurance from the seemingly gelid ascetic who had repelled her advances in the wilderness that, while he had resisted her blandishments, he had not failed to feel them. She then expired with the comfortable conviction that "love" is everything, even when it misses fire.

The Bernhardt Doctrine, like various other doctrines of contemporaneous prominence, was so elastic that it sometimes became perplexing, even to experts; but, as nearly as it could be ascertained, it declared that any kind of conduct, so long as it is actuated by "love," is necessarily impressive and interesting, and therefore can properly be presented on the stage. That interpretation opens a large door, wherethrough many things can enter,—for "love" is a word that bears various

definitions. The thing that entered with Bernhardt was the Erring Sister who gets to glory by being "ruined." That genus has long been sufficiently common in the drama, but the famous French actress presented a peculiar variety of it. Her fallen angel was customarily "heeled." *Izeyl* slaughtered an unwelcome lover with a dagger. *Tosca* slew an amorous tyrant with a carving-knife. *Théodora* perforated a dangerous witness of her adulterous conduct with a convenient hairpin. *Gismonda* settled her foe with a hatchet. *Jacqueline* removed her aversion with a pistol. There is a fertility of resource in proceedings of that kind,—a nimble alacrity,—which invests the courtesan character with exceptional lustre, admonishing the observer that "love" not only "levels all ranks," but keeps them levelled; not only "lays the shepherd's crook beside the sceptre," but occasionally lays the shepherd also,—in point of fact, lays him out. All this is important to society, and especially it is essential to the rising generation, the generous, eager, receptive, pleasure-seeking young persons who, for the greater part, constitute the theatrical audience.

For there is nothing like an adequate comprehension of "love," and sweet it is to reflect that devoted friends of forlorn humanity, such as the illustrious Bernhardt, the beneficent Pinero, and the philanthropic Jones, have been simultaneously employed,—together with other nourishing dramatic agencies,—in dissemi-

nating a correct knowledge of that enchanting subject. Upon some themes,—such as Tariff, Labor, Capital, and who shall be Queen of the May next time,—the public mind may wander in darkness; but, under the present ministration of the Theatre, it can easily obtain a liberal education in "love." According to Jones (see "Michael and His Lost Angel"), love is "the wind that blew us together." Pinero inclines to the more traditional view, that it is "the wind that shakes the barley"; but with Bernhardt it was ever the true wind of doctrine,—"all for love, and keep your powder dry," —and although the actress seemed somewhat elderly for what *Mrs. Malaprop* calls "the hydrostatics," her melodious voice, clear articulation, sinuous, feline, expeditious movements, and professional expertness enabled her to furnish an adequate expression of the great and holy truth which it was her mission to deliver. In a technical point of view her embodiment of *Izeyl* was marked by artistic refinement and an admirably skilful method of expression.

The play of "Izeyl,"—prolix, sentimental, and impious,—served well as a medium for the display of the personal peculiarities of the accomplished actress. In the allurement of the sacred recluse, a person intended to be recognized as the Christ, she made no secret of her purpose, albeit the obdurate *Sarymuni* declined to wilt: she slew the odious *Scindia* with neatness and despatch and hid his corpse with a dexterity that might

From a Photograph by Byron, N. Y. *In the Collection of the Author.*

SARAH BERNHARDT
as
Duc de Reichstadt,

BENOIT-CONSTANT COQUELIN
as
Flambeau,

in "L'Aiglon."

have charmed an undertaker; but it was in her subsequent recital of the experience through which *Izeyl* had passed that her best powers were manifested.

"L'AIGLON."

Sarah Bernhardt, Benoit-Constant Coquelin, and their dramatic company, beginning a professional tour of America, under the management of the late Maurice Grau, appeared at the Garden Theatre, on November 26, 1900, presenting Rostand's drama of "L'Aiglon," in its original form and language. French verse is, for the most part, a melancholy flow of wearisome cadence, but there is a certain spirit inherent in the native language of every written work of art that eludes expression in any other tongue. The play was more credible in French than it had seemed in English, and it was more ably and effectively acted, in almost all the parts, by Mme. Bernhardt and her associates, than it had been, about one month earlier, by the American performers at the Knickerbocker Theatre. Sarah Bernhardt, in contrast with Maude Adams, suggested the leopard alongside of the kitten.

There are in the drama of "L'Aiglon" two dramatic situations of extraordinary artistic felicity, providing abundant occasion for display of character and emotion. One of them is the scene at the mirror; the other is the scene on the haunted battlefield of Wagram. The character of *Reichstadt* is weak and trivial, but Mme.

Bernhardt, a woman of great personal force and an actress of great skill and trained ability, was superb in both those situations. At the mirror, beholding his fatal resemblance to the Austrian royal line, and goaded by the icy, ironical, cruel barb of *Metternich's* merciless sarcasm, the wretched boy becomes frenzied with self-scorn and self-disgust to think himself the son of Napoleon Bonaparte and to know himself nerveless and helpless, "unstable as the wind, infirm as foam." On the lonely battlefield, in the middle of the night, hearing, as in a horrid dream, "the thunder of the captains and the shouting," the yells of murderous rage and the groans of anguish, he is driven momentarily mad by conflicting emotions, so that he raves with frenzy and desperately launches himself into furious fight with the phantoms of his distracted brain. This dramatic fabric, remotely borrowed from Shakespeare, is nevertheless vital, as one of the few authentic splendors of modern French dramatic literature; and, as the climax and central effect of "L'Aiglon," it redeems a prolix and tedious play; tedious, that is, to all except the idolaters of Napoleon Bonaparte and his kind,—

> "Those Pagod things of sabre sway,
> With fronts of brass and feet of clay."

The effect of that passage was marred by the introduction of waving spectres and a sudden and silly

yellow calcium. Mme. Bernhardt's supreme charm is her voice, of which the liquid sweetness is a marvel, after all the vicissitudes and ravages of a long and laborious professional career—a career which began when she was about seventeen years old and which has continued, in the storm and stress of an ambitious, impulsive, exhausting life ever since. It was refreshing, when she appeared as *Reichstadt* in "L'Aiglon," to see the famous actress in a play not only romantic but decent. She did not much resemble a male, but her slight figure was full of grace, and she merged herself in the character and fully impersonated it. Such a part could present no difficulties to such an actress. Every element in it,—lassitude, petulance, irritability, mental disgust, mordant and consuming fever, thirst for action, and the sense of weakness,—was distinctly expressed, and above all the reckless abandonment to sensual joys which, in such a temperament as that of the theatrical *Reichstadt,* might well result from baffled ambition and a curbed or broken spirit. The impersonation was one of beautiful symmetry.

Coquelin acted *Flambeau*—an easy part for any experienced actor, and an especially easy part for him. *Flambeau* is the representative soldier of Napoleon, the veteran in whose eyes the little Corsican was a hero and in whose memory he is a god. Courage, tenderness, humor, blunt honesty, simple truth and heroism blend in such a character, and,—as shown, for example, in

Dagobert, in Sue's fine novel of "The Wandering Jew,"—deeply endear it to the sympathetic heart. Coquelin entered fully into the spirit of the part and made it the most natural figure in the drama.

It is within the experience of every votary of the Theatre that some actors touch the heart, illumine the imagination, and cast a magical charm over life, so that their images linger in the memory, from youth to age, and are cherished with a kind of worship. The venerable Charles Fladgate, the father of the Garrick Club, in London, exulted in that sort of remembrance of John Philip Kemble. The late Chief Justice Daly kept, to the last of his great age, that sort of remembrance, hallowed and hallowing, of Edmund Kean. There are persons still extant, in the evening twilight of life, who speak tenderly of Charlotte Cushman and of Malibran, of Helena Faucit, of Ellen Tree, and of the classic Rachel. Happy, or, if not happy, at least glorious, are those creatures of genius who possess the power of enduring enchantment,—their splendor surviving long after they have vanished into everlasting night. The homage that flows toward them is spontaneous, and admiration finds it easy to celebrate their powers and their deeds. Sarah Bernhardt, although she is an extraordinary actress, is not of that hallowed company, and it is useless to expect of the heart a tribute that it does not voluntarily offer. No actress better understands the mechanism of acting; no actress

possesses a wider command of the resources of dramatic expression; no actress could more readily conquer expert approbation; no actress, with all the advantages thus indicated, could leave the observer more completely cold. Of homage to the magical order of mind and soul it might well be said, as it has been said of a kindred feeling—

> "Love gives itself, and, if not given,
> No genius, beauty, worth nor wit,
> No gold of earth, no gem of heaven,
> Is rich enough to purchase it."

VARIOUS CHARACTERS.

Among various other parts that Bernhardt acted on the American Stage are *Magda,* in the drama by Hermann Sudermann, which is usually designated by the name of its heroine; *Gismonda,* in the play bearing that title; *Césarine,* in "La Femme de Claude"; *Floria,* in "La Tosca," and *Jacqueline Fleuriot,* in "La Femme X." Bernhardt's exhibition of her ideal of *Hamlet* and her published views of that character once attracted much public attention; both the performance and the performer's views of the subject have been fully considered in my "Shakespeare on the Stage"—Series I.,—and they do not require attention here. The play of "Magda," which was introduced to the American Stage by Mme. Modjeska, is described and discussed in the chapter of the present work devoted to that remark-

able actress. It is constituted of strained situations and it does not contain any scene well calculated to evoke Bernhardt's characteristic impetuous force and vehement, tumultuous loquacity. In the scene of *Magda's* return to her home she exerted the charm of a pleasing vivacity, and in the repulse of her smug, hypocritical, recreant lover she forcibly expressed contempt and aversion.

Sardou's drama of "Gismonda" was first acted in America, in an English translation, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on December 11, 1894—the late Fanny Davenport and Melbourne McDowell acting its two leading parts. On February 10, 1896, Bernhardt brought forward the original French play at Abbey's Theatre and played *Gismonda.* This, like many of Sardou's plays, was written especially for that eminent actress, and it afforded a perfect medium for the display of her powers. Persons who believe that any subject is suitable for exposition in the Theatre, and who derive pleasure from contemplation of the sleek carnality of a tiger-cat, were much edified by it. It is a reeking compound of animal propensity, treacherous cruelty, and violent death. The period of it is 1450. The story relates that *Francesco,* son of *Gismonda,* a widow and *Duchess of Athens,* was, by *Gregorez,* a conspirator against her sovereignty, surreptitiously precipitated into a pit occupied by a tiger; that the boy's life was saved by an intrepid falconer, *Almerio,* who leaped into the pit and killed the beast by thrusting a poignard into one of its eyes and so

through its brain; that *Gismonda,* in a delirium of joy at the rescue of her son, vowed before God to wed the man who had saved him; that on discovering him to be only a falconer she repented her vow and tried to avoid fulfilling it, because of *Almerio's* obscure origin and low station; that the resolute falconer, a man of great powers and superior character, who had long loved her, demanded the fulfilment of her promise; that he raised himself to the rank of *Count of Sonla,* by surprising and slaying a terrible pirate, *Fabrique,*—whose head he dangled from his saddle bow; that the Pope of Rome refused to absolve *Gismonda* from her vow, and that *Almerio,* in the face of threats, imprisonment, and danger of death, adhered to his purpose of forcing a marriage with the *Duchess of Athens* until that lady besought him to release her from her vow of marriage on condition that, instead of becoming his wife, she become his concubine; that *Almerio* agreed to this proposition, and that *Gismonda* privately visited him in a sequestered hut to consummate their union; that in leaving *Almerio* she overheard a conversation between *Gregorez* and his instigator in crime, *Zaccaria Franco,*—who were stealing upon *Almerio* to murder him,—which apprised her that *Zaccaria* had sought and nearly caused the death of her child; that, thereupon, in the prompt manner so congenial to the Bernhardt temperament and method, she smote the treacherous *Zaccaria* with a hatchet conveniently dropped by *Gregorez,* who

ran away; that the falconer publicly released the *Duchess* from her promise of marriage and assumed the guilt of the murder, and that *Gismonda,* deeply affected by this maganimous conduct, decided that she preferred *Almerio* as a husband rather than a paramour, told the truth as to the killing of *Zaccaria,*—a deed which then was generally approved,—and entered into holy wedlock with her low-born lover.

The play,—which, as usual with such monstrosities, was heralded as "daring" merely because it is brutal in story and pernicious in effect,—is artificial, fantastic, and shocking. It supplements a prolix exposition of the workings of "love" with a dramatic display of the triumph of murder. The setting and dressing of it were more than commonly gorgeous. In the scene of *Gismonda's* emotional capitulation to the conquering allurements of her handsome, brawny, persistent adorer Bernhardt exerted her fascinations with peculiar skill,—but never, except in a feline congress, has the progress and climax of "the tender passion" been announced with such a tumult of screams and snarls as it pleased those lovers to create. Bernhardt's action, as *Gismonda,* in the killing of her foe, was marked by the startling celerity and deep relish born of abundant practice in that cheerful form of art. Further to analyze and consider her performance of *Gismonda* and its effect on the public mind would be only to traverse again a line of reflection already sufficiently pursued.

Claude's wife, *Césarine,* in "La Femme de Claude," was charlatan, courtesan, traitor, liar, thief, hypocrite, and adulteress. Her prototype, possibly, could be found in life: every variety of evil appears to exist in human form: but the right place for such miscreants as *Césarine* is an asylum for the criminal insane, not the Theatre. *Claude,* after ample experience of his wife's wickedness, and after long endurance of her shameful conduct, became convinced that she was totally depraved, irredeemable, and unfit to live. He found her on the brink of elopement with one of his apprentices, whom she had induced to steal a valuable property of his, and he calmly shot her through the bowels, using a heavy-bore shotgun and instantly killing her. The employment of some such decisive and summary means of exterminating all plays that deal with erotomania and exploit filthy wickedness and loathsome disease would afford to the Theatre a relief which is urgently needed. Bernhardt as *Césarine* embodied yet another of those prodigies of glittering evil by which her imagination has ever been allured and inflamed and in the presentment of which she has long been incomparably powerful and expert. In *Césarine's* defiance of *Claude,* in the moment before he shoots her, she became an image, awful and dreadful, of fiendish malignity. To linger on that personation would be merely to dwell on a show of horror at once useless and reprehensible.

In her performance of the central character in Sar-

dou's drama of "La Tosca" Bernhardt provided first an image of tantalizing coquetry and later created a thrilling effect of terror. The coquetry of *Tosca* is expended on her lover. The terror incident to her conduct was imparted at the moment when she repels the amorous assault of the libidinous miscreant *Scarpia* by plunging a carving-knife into his heart. There is an interlude between those two extremes when *Tosca's* lover is tortured with hideous cruelty, in order to elicit from her,—as she hears his moans and shrieks of agony and gazes on his gashed and bleeding countenance,—the disclosure of the hiding-place of a fugitive from *Scarpia's* malignant tyranny; and, in that episode of a lurid, brutal, horrible play, the actress had to express an ever increasing access of mental anguish which at last becomes delirium. Bernhardt's acting, at all points in that frightful fabric of lust and slaughter, was magnificent,—for it created the effect of perfect illusion; and that effect would not have ensued unless the several situations had been made to seem actual by exact simulation of feeling and exercise of the power of imagination, and unless the personality of the heroine had been made to seem actual by convincing art. The scene of *Tosca's* arrangement of the corpse of *Scarpia,* after she has killed him, together with the furtive obtainment of the deadly weapon and its sudden terrible employment, as illumined by Bernhardt, will be remembered with a shuddering sense of horror, as long as anything is

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Thomas R. Smith, Esq.*

SARAH BERNHARDT
as
Frou-Frou, in "Frou-Frou."

remembered of her achievement. It was art expended on a low theme, but of its kind it was absolutely perfect art.

The impersonation presented in "La Femme X" was that of an unfortunate, wretched woman, by name *Jacqueline Fleuriot,* who passes through an experience of sin, degradation, and misery, ending with her death. The part of *Jacqueline* provides opportunity for the expression of acute mental anguish, desolation, frantic passion, and the abandonment of an immitigable woe. At one point, when *Jacqueline's* outraged and furious husband resists her supplication, denies her access to their sick child, repudiates her, and expels her from his home, Bernhardt's felicity of artistic method was especially exemplified. The situation is pathetic, and, though this actress never manifested the power to impart tenderness from the depth of her own nature, she did possess, and in that scene she splendidly employed, the skill to cause dramatic effect,—expressing the pathos of it by the rapid, copious, diversified utterance of impassioned entreaty, and by a use of gesture which was remarkably illuminative of entreaty, frenzy, and despair: certainly art could do no more than was done by Bernhardt, at *Jacqueline's* exit, at the climax of that scene: the terrible cry, outside, with which she ended it, was one of the most deft expedients ever employed on our Stage. Later there is a scene showing *Jacqueline* in company with a coarse, profligate paramour, and requir-

ing first a mute impartment,—in face, person, and involuntary demeanor,—of hopeless abjection, and then an outburst of fury, in which she shoots and kills the blackguard who has avowed the purpose to levy blackmail on her husband. The art of Bernhardt was consummate throughout that ordeal. Every fibre of her being was made to denote abandonment and misery, till at the pivotal moment she liberated the whole force of her craftily restrained passion, and caused one of those lurid effects of reckless impetuosity for which her acting was remarkable. Her death scene was unexpectedly prolix, and therefore not particularly effective, but,—it was unblemished by physical repulsiveness. The play, ethically, is specious and unsound; it conveys no definite meaning, nor can any useful monition be deduced from it other than the trite, undeniable precept that human charity toward the weakness of humanity is a virtue. The meaning of melodrama, originally, was,—as its designation signifies,—drama with music. The meaning which it has come to bear is that of drama of situation, violent sensation, and vivid contrast, and in that category "La Femme X" holds its place. Its technical utility is strong.

SUMMARY.

There is, or was, a taste, as to dramatic art, which resorts, or did resort, to the Theatre, with rational expectation of seeing on the stage something refined, intellectual, and noble; something by which observers

were to be pleased, cheered, charmed, impressed, elevated above the commonplace, benefited, and made better and happier. The appeal thus made by the dramatic art is an appeal to the better feelings and the finer faculties, and the making of it requires, —beside dramatic ability,—scholarship and refinement. The administration of the Theatre once concerned itself far more with those requirements than now it does, and from time to time I find myself stigmatized as "a reactionary" because I perceive that fact and mention it. If to hold fast to the silver cord of purity in dramatic art, and to advocate its beauty, influence, and power, and to foster the respect due to its faithful ministers is to be "a reactionary"—then I confess that I have deserved the designation. I know, —perhaps better than most persons do,—the mutations in theatrical affairs; but also I know that the time has been when the votary of the Stage could follow it without affront to self-respect and, more often than he can to-day, could see and remember a play without mortification and disgust. The mental associations then formed with the most conspicuous actors were fruitful of fine fancies, gentle thoughts, and lovely ideals. Nothing has more distinctly marked the discardure of good taste and the compliant surrender to vulgar curiosity than the presentation and acceptance of such a narrow, morbid, fantastic eccentricity in dramatic art as Sarah Bernhardt continually showed herself to be—

an actress who habitually appeared in dramas that were mostly nightmares, and who scarcely ever presented, or tried to present, a type of womanhood that could be seen without shame or remembered without abhorrence. There is no need of hesitation in writing plainly of such a matter. It is not the historian of the Stage who has obtruded on public attention the *Fédoras, Théodoras, Gismondas,* and *Césarines,*—the vile deformities of a lawless fancy, a perverse ingenuity, and a morbid mind: it is the public performer who introduced those monstrosities to the public attention, and who, by the misuse of exceptional talents and a potent personality, has compelled the consideration of them,—that public performer who chose to embellish and variegate her professional progress with skeletons, coffins, monkeys, tiger-cats, and snakes, till, at length, her name,—which ought ever to have been that of a renowned actress, and which, as such, it would have been ever a delight to honor,—became the synonyme of dramatic extravagance, affectation, insincerity, and folly.

The assertion that the person and the artist are entirely distinct, and that they must never be viewed as one, is a part of the critical cant of the day, and it may always be expected to arise as a shield for every offence against those artistic laws of beauty which ought to govern and protect the Stage. *'A work of art should be contemplated as a work of art, and as nothing else':* that, summarily, is the mantle with which it is

attempted to cover a multitude of theatric sins. But the artist,—in whatsoever line of art he may operate,—who expects to create an artistic work without putting his soul into it, and without disclosing his moral and spiritual as well as his intellectual nature, is ignorant of even the first elements and simplest laws of life. The acting is the actor. Through the one you see the other,—for it steadily shines upon you and could not conceal itself if it would. You may, if you like, ostensibly ignore it in the discussion of the particular artistic achievement; but the person is always behind the work, and you will find, upon analysis, that your views of anything that has been made invariably depend upon your perception of the being who made it. The acting of Sarah Bernhardt could not be separated from her personality. The moment she tried to depart from herself she failed. This may be a reason why the distinguished French actress adhered to her chosen course: it is not a reason why her professional proceedings should be admired and extolled by those who think, and who are conscious of an intellectual and moral responsibility to the public in what they say.

It is a popular delusion that the fame of an actor is not lasting. When an actor happens to be of importance,—to be endowed, that is, with genius, and to devote that genius to great subjects,—the resultant renown is as lasting as that of any other artist, though the actual contemplation of his creation is not possible. Garrick,

Kean, and Kemble have long been dust, but their fame as actors has reached to persons who are unfamiliar with the artistic creations, still extant, of Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, or Handel. It will not be so with Sarah Bernhardt. She belonged to her day, and with her day she will pass. As an actress, her greatness is circumscribed within narrow and inflexible limits. She was remarkable, chiefly, for the extraordinary professional skill with which she executed her personations. The importance of a great actor's career, however, depends not on expertness, but on the beneficial effect of that career upon the time in which it passes. In the career of Sarah Bernhardt there was but little that was of actual benefit to humanity. Her great opportunities were used not for an artistic but for a commercial result and for personal aggrandizement, and she gradually but surely alienated the interest of many thoughtful persons, such as regard the Theatre as something higher than a shop or as an arena in which to display personality and gratify vanity. The oftener she was seen on the stage the more clearly she denoted her narrow range, her monotonous style, and her prosaic quality. In her love scenes she was, invariably, the woman who is trying to awaken desire in her lover; never the woman who loves. There were the usual clinging, purring, posturing, and cooing, the customary murmur, and the customary protracted osculation. She could and did readily show a woman who is trying to

fascinate men; her stage heroine was always willing to be loved: but she could not represent with truth a woman who loves.

Nothing ever could have imparted *grandeur* to the mental constitution of Sarah Bernhardt. She attracted principally as an eccentricity and delighted as a speaker. Such a personation as Ellen Terry's *Margaret,* in "Faust," was not only beyond her ability as an actress, it was beyond her comprehension as a woman. As a theatrical executant, however, she was superb and admirable. Her utterance of the French language was delicious. In seductive wiles, in moments of abrupt transition, and in the expression of viperish fury she was both felicitous and powerful. Her vehement and impetuous delivery of vituperative tirades was extraordinarily effective. But memory carried away from her performances no impression of nobility, or of poetry, or of tenderness. She could neither touch the heart nor kindle the exultant glow of the imagination. Therefore she was, by intellectual observers, viewed without deep feeling, and she is generally remembered without pleasure.

XXXV.

LILIAN ADELAIDE NEILSON.

1846?—1880.

"Here's a few flowers; but about midnight more:
The herbs that have on them cold dew o' the night
Are strewings fitt'st for graves."

—CYMBELINE.

THIS actress, the best representative of Shakespeare's *Juliet, Viola,* and *Imogen* who has appeared on the stage in our time, or, probably, in any time, was born, —out of wedlock,—in or near Leeds, Yorkshire, England, in or about 1846. It was my privilege to possess her friendship and to receive from her lips some particulars of her early life and her professional experience. She mentioned March 3 as her birthday, but did not mention the year of her birth. Her father's name was unknown to her, and it remains unknown. Her mother was an obscure actress, by name Brown, who married a mechanic named Bland. In girlhood Lilian Adelaide Neilson, then bearing the name of Elizabeth Ann Bland, dwelt in the village of Guiseley, near Leeds, and was employed in a factory. She was a pretty girl, precocious in mind, fond of reading, skilful with her needle, domestic in taste, pleasant

and engaging in manner. At an early age, by reading her mother's play-books,—relics of the professional occupation from which Miss Brown had retired,—she became acquainted with various plays, including some of those of Shakespeare, and it was one of her juvenile amusements to act and declaim before a number of dolls that she had made, to represent an audience. Sometimes she witnessed dramatic performances that were given by strolling actors, in the neighborhood of her home. She attended a parochial school at Guiseley, the presiding teacher of which, Mr. Frizell, has related that she was an attentive, studious pupil, possessed of a good memory and notable for an unusual talent in recitation. Her education, however, was meagre. She attended a Methodist church, but neither then nor at any time did she become a church member. The testimony,—fragmentary and imperfect,—which I have gathered concerning her youth represents that she was an interesting girl, unselfish, docile, gentle, considerate of others, industrious, willing to do any work that came to her hand, and, although consciously handsome, neither spoiled by vanity nor embittered by coarse surroundings and hard usage.

When about fourteen years old she accidentally discovered the fact of her illegitimate birth, and she became discontented and restless. Sympathy between the mother and daughter had never existed, and after discovering her illegitimacy the girl seems to have

determined on pursuing an independent course. She took service as a nursery maid, and in that employment she continued for about two years. She then resolved to leave Guiseley and seek her fortune in London. At that time she was in her seventeenth year, and at that momentous crisis of her life, when most she needed practical friendship and wise counsel, she was left to her own ignorant, wayward, feeble guidance,—an unprotected girl, to encounter the hardships and perils of a pitiless world. She left home secretly, going first to Leeds and afterward to the capital, where she arrived destitute and friendless. Of her experience during the next two or three years she said only that it was painful and wretched. She adopted the name of Lilian Adelaide Lessont, and after a while obtained employment in a theatre, where, little by little, she made her way to favorable notice. Her first important professional appearance occurred in 1865, at Margate,—long the place of trial for aspirant novices,—where she acted *Juliet.* Her name had been changed to Neilson, and about the time of that appearance a biography was provided for her, declaring her to be the daughter of a Spanish nobleman and an English governess, and naming Saragossa as her birthplace. That fiction, widely circulated and generally credited, clung to her for a long time. Her performance of *Juliet,* given at Margate, was approved, and later in 1865 she appeared at the Royalty Theatre, London, in that char-

acter, and was successful. Among her favorable critics and friends at that time were Westland Marston, the dramatist, and Joseph Knight,—whom she always gratefully remembered. During the years from 1865 to 1870 she was in continual practice of her profession, and she strove with persistent energy to win a high position. Among the parts that she acted, at the Royalty Theatre and at the Adelphi, were *Gabrielle de Savigny,* in "The Huguenot Captain"; *Victorine,* in the drama of that name; *Rebecca,* in "Ivanhoe"; *Nelly Armroyd,* in "Lost in London"; *Lilian,* in "Life for Life"; *Mary Belton,* in "Uncle Dick's Darling," and *Mme. Vidal,* in "A Life Chase." She performed in various other plays and she made several tours of English provincial cities, and in particular she surprised the inhabitants of Leeds and its neighborhood when they came to know that the brilliant and beautiful Miss Neilson was the vagrant factory girl and nursery maid of Guiseley. In 1870, acting in London, at Drury Lane, she gained extraordinary success as *Amy Robsart,* in a drama on Scott's novel of "Kenilworth," and on December 19, 1870, at the same theatre, she acted *Juliet,* creating an impression of genius and distinctive excellence that was decisive and was destined to endure. At that time she was the wife of Philip Lee, the son of a clergyman, resident at Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire. Her married life was unhappy, as well for her husband as for herself. It does not very

often happen that a popular actress, whose vanity is continually fed by public admiration, is contented with domesticity, or that a man who is wedded to a popular actress finds any repose or comfort in the union. In 1877 Mrs. Lee obtained a divorce.

Miss Neilson made four professional tours of America,—in 1872, 1874, 1876, and 1879. Her first appearance in America was made at Booth's Theatre, New York, on November 18, 1872. Almost from the beginning her success here was unequivocal. Her repertory while in America comprised *Juliet, Rosalind, Viola, Imogen, Beatrice, Isabella, Amy Robsart, Pauline,* and *Lady Teazle.* Her last engagement in New York ended on May 24, 1880, and on the next day she started for San Francisco, where she acted from June 8 until July 13. She then returned to New York and on July 28 sailed, aboard the Abyssinia, for England. Eighteen days afterward she was dead,—dead in her youth and beauty, in the ripeness of her fame, at the end of great toils, and just in the morning of what was hoped would be a new life of happiness and peace. Never was a more brilliant theatrical career arrested at its meridian by a more precipitant stroke of fate. Never did death seem more untimely or loss more irreparable. For many a day the Stage, bereft of her radiant presence, seemed desolate, and to persons who knew her well and saw the loveliness of her disposition, the gentleness of her spirit, the large gen-

erosity of her mind, and the radiance of cheerfulness that she diffused, the life of the Stage has not since seemed as bright as once it was; for she was a person of extraordinary charm, a charm that it is not easily possible to define. Upon her career as an actress,—a career which extended over fifteen years,—there can be but one judgment: it was a career of continual artistic advance and of splendid achievement. More remained to be accomplished, but much had been done, and surely it is not amiss to note with strong emphasis the fact of her youth, when considered in association with such large results of genius employed in the ministry of art. She was indeed,—to have done so much, and, rising from abject obscurity, to have risen so far,—a very young woman. In that view she was a prodigy. It is remarkable also that she bore so well the always perilous burdens of early triumph. She had the intuitions of genius and also its quick spirit and wild temperament. She was ruled largely by her imagination and her feelings, and she did not possess either the craft natural to selfishness or the prudence that is taught by worldly experience. Such a nature might easily go to wreck and ruin. She outrode the storms of a passionate, wayward youth and anchored safe at last in the haven of duty. Her image, as it rises in my memory, is not that of the actress who stormed the citadel of all hearts in the delirium of *Juliet,* or dazzled by the witchery of *Rosalind's* joy or *Viola's* tender

grace, but it is that of the grave, sweet woman, who, playing softly in the twilight, sang, in a rich, tremulous, touching voice, the anthem on "the man of sorrows acquainted with grief."

Her last birthday she passed in New York, at the Westminster Hotel, and she was then looking forward hopefully to the success of her farewell engagements and to tranquil days in retirement, in her cherished home in England. Whatever may have been the errors and blemishes of her early life, she was, by nature, noble, magnanimous, charitable, gentle, affectionate, confiding, —a true woman, who meant to do right and ought to have been happy. Her death befell suddenly, at a chalet where illness had compelled her to halt, in the course of a drive in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, on August 15, 1880. Her body was conveyed to London and buried in Brompton Cemetery. A white marble cross marks her grave, inscribed with the words "Gifted and Beautiful—Resting."

The fatality had been darkly presaged. When Miss Neilson left America she was somewhat broken in health and much more broken in spirit, although, in appearance, as well and beautiful as ever. I remember that a certain dim presentiment of bereavement prompted me, during her last season on the American Stage, to endeavor to make something like an adequate estimate, in print, of the quality of her genius and the beauty and abiding worth of her art.

I was aware of the strain to which she had been subjected, and of the serious danger,—a tendency to disease of the heart,—which, in her unsparing, incessant professional exertions, she frequently incurred. I knew also that within a certain line of character she was the best actress of her time, and that, in America, she would be seen no more. There is a kind of satisfaction in the remembrance that the tribute then paid to her, in earnestness alike of thought and feeling, was, at least in purpose, such as her fine powers and achievements deserved, and such as carried to her kind heart a sense of comfort. It may be that she did not die too soon for her fame. The work had been done that it was appointed for her to do. No shaft of malice or envy can ever wound again that gentle soul. No word of detraction can sully the white roses of pity that cover her blameless dust.

This Elegy,—expressive, however imperfectly, of the sorrow which the death of this remarkable woman inspired,—was written by me, soon after the event:

FIDÈLE.

And oh, to think the sun can shine,
  The birds can sing, the flowers can bloom,
And she, whose soul was all divine,
  Be darkly mould'ring in the tomb:

That o'er her head the night wind sighs,
  And the sad cypress droops and moans;

That night has veiled her glorious eyes,
And silence hushed her heavenly tones:

That those sweet lips no more can smile,
Nor pity's tender shadows chase,
With many a gentle, childlike wile,
The rippling laughter o'er her face:

That dust is on the burnished gold
That floated round her royal head;
That her great heart is dead and cold,
Her form of fire and beauty dead!

Roll on, gray earth and shining star,
And coldly mock our dreams of bliss:
There is no glory left to mar,
Nor any grief so black as this!

THE FUNERAL OF ADELAIDE NEILSON.

A letter to me, from Clinton Stuart ("Walsingham"), dated London, August 20, 1880, gives a glimpse of Miss Neilson's funeral:

"I have just come from Brompton Cemetery, where the funeral took place at noon. The sky was clouded all the morning and there was a light rain just before the hearse and carriages arrived, but the sun came out, and it was quite warm as the services were held at the grave. There was such a concourse of people that the mourners were almost mobbed. It was decided to follow the hearse to the grave on foot from the chapel instead of going in the carriages, but this was to be regretted, for the crowd was so dense and so unruly that those who felt the solemnity of the scene and had a right to follow all that remained of our poor friend were pushed and hustled and, in some instances, kept back

altogether from the grave. After brief services in the chapel the coffin (which was of light wood, with an inscribed silver plate, and was covered with a wreath and two crosses of white flowers and geranium leaves) was again placed in the great hearse, drawn by four plumed horses. The mourners followed on foot, and all the way to the grave the chapel bell tolled solemnly. Admiral Glyn and Lady Sinclair, Edward Compton, Mrs. John Wood, and Miss Fanny Josephs were among the mourners. I saw there Miss Carlotta Leclercq (Mrs. Nelson), in widow's weeds and bearing a white wreath; John S. Clarke, and Miss Helen Barry. The narrow vault was lined with purple and the white flowers were left on the coffin. It is such a dreadfully sudden bereavement that every one here who knew her is stunned by it. She had a very lovely nature."

* * * * * * *

"CYMBELINE."

Shakespeare could not have been an exception to the natural rule that every author obeys a feeling, distinct from intellectual purpose, which impels him in the exercise of his art. The feeling that shines through "Cymbeline" is a loving delight in the character of *Imogen.* The nature of that feeling and the quality of that character, had they been obscure, would have been made clear by Adelaide Neilson's embodiment. The personality that she presented was typical and unusual. It embodied virtue, neither hardened by austerity nor vapid with excess of goodness, and it embodied seductive womanhood, without one touch of wantonness or guile. It presented a woman innately good and radi-

antly lovely, who, amid severest trials, spontaneously and unconsciously acted with the ingenuous grace of childhood, the amplest generosity, the most constant spirit. The essence of *Imogen's* nature is fidelity. Faithful to love, even till death, she is yet more faithful to honor. Her scorn of falsehood is overwhelming; but she resents no injury, harbors no resentment, feels no spite, murmurs at no misfortune. From every blow of evil she recovers with a gentle patience that is infinitely pathetic. Passionate and acutely sensitive, she yet seems never to think of antagonizing her affliction or to falter in her unconscious fortitude. She has no reproach, but only a grieved submission, for the husband who has wronged her by his suspicions and has doomed her to death. She thinks only of him, not of herself, when she beholds him, as she supposes, dead at her side; but even then she will submit and endure, she will but "weep and sigh" and say twice o'er "a century of prayers." She is only sorry for the woman who was her deadly enemy and who hated her for her goodness,—so often the incitement of mortal hatred. She loses without a pang the heirship to a kingdom. An ideal thus poised in goodness and radiant in beauty might well have sustained,—as undoubtedly it did sustain,—the inspiration of Shakespeare.

Adelaide Neilson, with her uncommon graces of person, found it easy to make the Chamber Scene and the Cave Scenes pictorial and charming. Her ingenuous

From an Unpublished Photograph. *In the Collection of the Author.*

ADELAIDE NEILSON
as
Imogen, in "Cymbeline."

trepidation and her pretty wiles, as *Fidele,* in the cave, were finely harmonious with the character and arose from it like odor from a flower. The innocence, the glee, the feminine desire to please, the pensive grace, the fear, the weakness, and the artless simplicity made up a state of gracious fascination. It was, however, in the revolt against *Iachimo's* perfidy, in the fall before *Pisanio's* fatal disclosure, and in the frenzy over the supposed death of *Leonatus* that the actress put forth electrical power and showed how strong emotion, acting through the imagination, can transfigure the being and give to love or sorrow a monumental semblance and an everlasting voice. The power was harmonious with the individuality and did not mar its grace. There was a perfect preservation of sustained identity, and this was expressed with such a sweet elocution and such an airy freedom of movement and flexibility of gesture that the observer forgot to notice the method of the mechanism and almost forgot that he was looking upon a fiction and a shadow. That her personation of *Imogen,* though more exalted in its nature than any of her works, excepting *Isabella,* would rival in acceptance her *Juliet, Viola,* or *Rosalind,* was not to be expected: it was too much a passive condition,—delicate and elusive,—and too little an active effort. She woke into life the sleeping spirit of a rather repellent drama, and was "alone the Arabian bird."

"ROMEO AND JULIET."

Shakespeare's *Juliet,* the beautiful, ill-fated heroine of his consummate poem of love and sorrow, was the most effective, if not the highest, of Adelaide Neilson's tragic assumptions. It carried to every eye and to every heart the convincing, thrilling sense equally of her beauty and her power. The exuberant womanhood, the celestial affection, the steadfast nobility, and the lovely, childlike innocence of *Imogen,*—shown through the constrained medium of a diffusive romance,—were not to all minds appreciable on the instant. The gentle sadness of *Viola,* playing around her joyous animation and absorbing it as the cup of the white lily swallows the sunshine, might well be, for the less keen senses of the average auditor, dim, fitful, evanescent, and ineffective. Ideal heroism and dream-like fragrance,—the colors of Murillo or the poems of Heine,—are truly known only to exceptional natures or in exceptional moods. The reckless, passionate idolatry of *Juliet,* on the contrary,—with its attendant sacrifice, its climax of disaster, and its sequel of anguish and death,—stands forth as clearly as the white line of the lightning on a black midnight sky, and no observer can miss its meaning. All that *Juliet* is, all that she acts and all that she suffers is elemental. It springs directly from the heart and it moves straight onward like a shaft of light. *Othello,* the perfection of simplicity, is not

simpler than *Juliet*. In him are embodied passion and jealousy, swayed by an awful instinct of justice. In her is embodied unmixed, immitigable passion, without law, limit, reason, patience, or restraint. She is love personified and therefore a fatality to herself. Presented in that way,—and in that way she was presented by Adelaide Neilson,—her nature and her experience come home to the feelings as well as the imagination, and all that we know, as well as all that we dream, of beauty and of anguish are centred in one image. In this we may see all the terrors of the moving hand of fate. In this we may almost hear a warning voice out of heaven, saying that nowhere except in duty shall the human heart find refuge and peace,—or, if not peace, submission.

There have been many *Juliets*. There has, in our time, been no *Juliet* as fascinating and irresistible as that of Adelaide Neilson. Through the medium of that character the actress poured forth the strange, thrilling, indescribable power which more than anything else in the world proclaims by its existence the spiritual grandeur and destiny of the human soul. Neither the accuracy of her ideals nor the fineness of her execution would have accomplished the result that attended her labors and crowned her fame. There was an influence back of these—a spark of the divine fire—a consecration of the individual life—as eloquent to inform as it was potent to move. Adelaide Neilson was one of those

strange, exceptional natures that, often building better than they know, not only interpret "the poet's dream" but give to it an added emphasis and a higher meaning. Each element of her personality was rich and rare. The eyes—now glittering with a mischievous gayety that seemed never to have seen a cloud or felt a sorrow, now steady, frank, and sweet, with innocence and trust,—could, in one moment, flash with the wild fire of defiance or the glittering light of imperious command, or, equally in one moment, could soften with mournful thought and sad remembrance, or darken with the far-off look of one who hears the waving wings of angels and talks with the spirits of the dead. The face, just sufficiently unsymmetrical to be brimful of character, whether piquant or pensive; the carriage of body,—easy yet odd in its artless grace, like that of a pretty child in the unconscious captivation of infancy; the restless, unceasing play of mood, and the instantaneous and perfect response of expression and gesture,—all these were the denotements of genius; and, above all these, and not to be mistaken in its irradiation of the interior spirit of that extraordinary creature, was a voice of perfect music—rich, sonorous, flexible, vibrant, copious in volume, yet delicate as a silver thread—a voice

> "Like the whisper of the woods
> In prime of even, when the stars are few."

It did not surprise that such a woman should truly act *Juliet.* Much though there be in a personality that is assumed, there is much more in the personality that assumes it. Golden fire in a porcelain vase would not be more luminous than was the soul of that actress as it shone through her ideal of *Juliet.* The performance did not stop short at the interpretation of a poetic fancy. It was amply and completely that, but it was more than that, being also a living experience. The subtlety of it was equalled only by its intensity, and neither was surpassed except by its reality. The moment she came upon the scene all eyes followed her, and every imaginative mind was vaguely conscious of something strange and sad—a feeling of perilous suspense—a dark presentiment of impending sorrow. In that was felt at once the presence of a nature to which the experience of *Juliet* would be possible; and thus the conquest of human sympathy was effected at the outset—by a condition, and without the exercise of a single effort. Fate no less than art participated in the result. Though it was the music of Shakespeare that flowed from the harp, it was the hand of living genius that smote the strings; it was the soul of a great woman that bore its vital testimony to the power of the universal passion.

Never was poet truer to the highest truth of spiritual life than Shakespeare is when he invests with ineffable mournfulness,—shadowy as twilight, vague as the remembrance of a dream,—those creatures of his fancy

who are preordained to suffering and a miserable death. Never was there sounded a truer note of poetry than that which thrills in *Othello's* "If it were now to die," or sobs in *Juliet's* "Too early seen unknown, and known too late." It was the exquisite felicity of Adelaide Neilson's acting of *Juliet* that she glided into harmony with that tragical undertone, and, with seemingly a perfect unconsciousness of it,—whether prattling to the old nurse, or moving, sweetly grave and softly demure, through the stately figures of the minuet,—was already marked off from among the living, already overshadowed by a terrible fate, already alone in the bleak loneliness of the broken heart. Striking the keynote thus, the rest followed in easy sequence. The ecstasy of the Wooing Scene, the agony of the final parting from *Romeo,* the forlorn tremor and passionate frenzy of the terrible night before the burial, the fearful awakening, the desperation, the paroxysm, the death-blow that then is mercy and kindness,—all these were in unison with the spirit at first denoted, and through these was naturally accomplished its prefigured doom. If clearly to possess a high purpose, to follow it directly, to accomplish it thoroughly, to adorn it with every grace, to conceal every vestige of art, and to cast over the art that glamour of poetry which ennobles while it charms, and while it dazzles also endears,—if this is greatness in acting, then was Adelaide Neilson's *Juliet* a great embodiment. It never will be forgotten. Its soft

romance of tone, its splendor of passion, its sustained energy, its beauty of speech, and its poetic fragrance are such as fancy must always cherish and memory cannot lose. Placing this embodiment beside *Imogen* and *Viola,* it was easy to understand the secret of the extraordinary success which attended Miss Neilson's acting. She satisfied, for all kinds of persons, the sense of the ideal. To youthful fancy she was the radiant vision of love and pleasure; to grave manhood, the image of all that chivalry should honor and strength protect; to woman, the type of noble goodness and constant affection; to the scholar, a relief from thought and care; to the moralist, a spring of tender pity,—that loveliness, however exquisite, must fade and vanish. Childhood, mindful of her kindness and her frolic, scattered flowers at her feet, and age, which knows the thorny pathways of the world, whispered its silent prayer and laid its trembling hands in blessing on her head.

XXXVI.

CLARA MORRIS.

1849—19—.

Clara Morris (Mrs. Frederick C. Harriot) was one of the most individual actors who have appeared on the American Stage in our time. Her family name was Morrison. She went on the stage when she was about thirteen years old, and she remained there during the greater part of her life. Her career began at Ellsler's Academy of Music, in Cleveland, and it was continued at Cincinnati, and at other places in the West, until, in 1870, she came to Augustin Daly's Theatre, then called the Fifth Avenue, which had been opened, in Twenty-fourth Street, in the autumn of 1869, and which was beginning to assert a rivalry with Wallack's. Her first appearance there was made as *Anne Silvester,* in "Man and Wife," September 13, 1870. Fanny Davenport had been cast for the part, but, after several rehearsals, had declined to play it, —preferring the more sprightly character of *Blanche Lundy,*—and Daly, thereupon, after telegraphic communication with John A. Ellsler, gave it to Miss Morris. "Can she play it?" was the question wired to Ellsler,

and "Try her!" was the veteran's laconic reply. The result justified expectation; for the acting of Miss Morris, notwithstanding crudity and a bizarre quality, was the revelation of natural capability for dramatic expression. From that time her advancement was rapid, and as long as she remained under Augustin Daly's management,—directed by his counsel and cheered by his encouragement,—she prospered in her art and was continuously successful.

Some of Miss Morris's triumphs were gained as *Mme. D'Artignes,* in "Jezebel"; *Magdalen Vanstone,* in "No Name"; *Mercy Merrick,* in "The New Magdalen"; *Cora,* in "Article 47"; *Alixe,* in the drama bearing that title, and *Madeleine Morel.* She played other parts,—among them being *Lucy Carter,* in "Saratoga"; *Lady Priory,* in "Wives as They Were," and *Herminie,* in "Diamonds,"—but in her acting of those parts there was not distinctive excellence. She was, essentially, a serious actress,—a representative of impetuous temperament, wayward character, and passionate emotion: yet she possessed an unusually keen sense of humor, combined with a remarkable aptitude for comic description, and, in her playful moods, a delightful fluency of caricature and mirth. Her best comic embodiment was *Tilburnia,* in "The Critic"; but her nature was never fully roused except in conflicts of feeling, and she is remembered not as an actress of either comedy or tragedy, in the technical sense of those words,—neither

as *Selina,* in "The Wicked World," nor *Julia,* in "The Hunchback," nor *Lady Macbeth,* all of which she attempted, and in all of which she, at least, revealed interesting attributes of personality,—but as an expositor of amorous human nature in self-conflict; a representative of erring virtue in misery, and of womanlike heroism in affliction. The characters that especially excited her enthusiasm were such as *Camille, Denise,* and *Miss Multon,*—the latter, in particular, which is a variant of *Mme. Vine,* in "East Lynne," having been a favorite with her, a chief instrument of her professional success, and the vehicle of her most finished performance. Into those types of passionate anguish, never at rest and never to find relief on this side of the grave, she liberated a copious torrent of emotion that carried the feelings by storm; and that was her victory. As a woman she was self-centred, as her writings abundantly manifest, showing, likewise, that she possessed little of either judgment or tact, but she had known poverty and trouble, and she was sympathetic with human suffering and naturally prone to pity and kindness.

About 1896 Miss Morris, who had ceased to appear in the regular theatre, acted for a while in the Variety, and also she delivered occasional public lectures and became an industrious but not very accurate writer for various magazines and newspapers. In 1904 she received a benefit from the theatrical profession, and

in that year she returned to the stage, making her last important appearance, if not the last one, as *Sister Genevieve,* in "The Two Orphans," which was acted at the New Amsterdam Theatre with "an all star cast."

"THE NEW MAGDALEN."

Miss Morris indicated, early in her career, a proclivity for the calamities of the heart and the painful moral questions that are suggested by such plays as "Jane Shore" and "The New Magdalen." Wilkie Collins's novel of that name is a tempting story for stage treatment, and Clara Morris, in adverting to it, obeyed a natural impulse. The piece that she presented was an alteration of the one by Collins himself, in which the intellectual power, magnetic spirit, and delicate, artistic style of Ada Cavendish enabled that actress to win a brilliant success. Miss Morris made changes in the text but not in the plan. There was no need of any change in either—the workmanship of Wilkie Collins, whether literary or dramatic, being excellent; and there is no literary man possessed of ordinary sense and judgment who would presume to meddle with any work of art once perfected by that great writer. Miss Morris retained all the dramatic points of the original play. The First Act was an epitome of the exciting, pictorial, effective prologue to the novel, in which *Grace Roseberry* and *Mercy Merrick* first meet, on a battlefield, and *Grace Roseberry* is struck

down by a stray shot, and *Mercy Merrick* takes the place of what she supposes to be a dead woman. The Second Act was a condensed exposition of subsequent events, in the English conventional home of *Lady Janet Roy.* It included the betrothal of the fictitious *Grace Roseberry* to *Horace Holmcroft,* her meeting with *Julian Gray,* and her discomfiture at the apparition of the woman whose name and place she had wrongfully assumed. The Third Act contained the scene of the encounter between the two women, in which the scorn and cruelty of vindictive virtue embitter and harden the repentant soul of vice and misfortune, and it ended with the real *Mercy Merrick's* heroic act of self-conquest. The last scene was a tableau of restitution, with such action as is designed to urge that there may be a perfect redemption, social as well as moral, for the outcast who repents, reforms, and has the courage to do right. The clearly-drawn and well-contrasted characters, the steadily accelerated movement, the cumulative interest, and the trenchant purpose of the original story were thus distinctly presented. The piece, indeed, did not—and no dramatic treatment could—reproduce that fine analysis of motives and that complex tissue of sentiment, feeling, reasoning, manners, epigram, and dry humor for which the novel is remarkable.

In "The Woman in White" and "Armadale," the mind of Wilkie Collins seems to have been swayed almost exclusively by his imagination. In "No Name,"

"Man and Wife," "The New Magdalen," and "The Black Robe" he manifested a desire to connect his writings with practical questions of the age, and to enforce moral truths of immediate and applicable significance. There is nowhere extant a more subtle and cogent treatment of the "muscular development" craze in the schools and colleges of the present day than can be found in his novel of "Man and Wife," written almost at the beginning of that craze. In that effort, and in kindred efforts, the purpose is a moral one. "The New Magdalen" is a plea for women who come out of a life of vice and try to lead a life of virtue. It is impossible, accordingly, to restrict the discussion of the work—whether play or novel—to its dramatic values alone. It is a sermon as well as a drama, and its moral values must also be considered. They are not clear. The charity, the tender compassion, the humane spirit, and the hopeful and cheering drift of the piece are obvious and unmistakable. Literature presents no instance of a better friend to woman than Wilkie Collins. In depicting *Magdalen Vanstone* (one of the most wonderfully drawn women in fiction), *Rosanna Spearman, Hester Dethridge, Mercy Merrick,* and *Miss Gwilt,* he manifested not only a profound knowledge of female human nature, but a noble and lovely sympathy with the feminine heart and temperament, and a broad, manly, lenient, and intelligent judgment as to the circumstances under which woman plays her part in the

world. His spirit is even finer than that of Steele, while his wisdom is commensurate with that of Thackeray. But, in the logic of morality, which applies to *Mercy Merrick,* his teaching is indecisive, for the reason that she is an exceptional woman, and therefore not a representative of the class of women to be redeemed. It was right that *Sir Patrick Lundy* should marry *Anne Silvester,* notwithstanding he is aware that she has been betrayed under promise of marriage. Peculiar circumstances justify unusual conduct. It may be right and noble that *Julian Gray* should marry *Mercy Merrick,* who has cast her sin away, and expiated her wrongdoing by an act of moral heroism such as proves her to be innately good and supremely true. But there again the circumstances are peculiar. If every repentant sinner, man or woman, were an heroic being, it might be possible to formulate, upon such a case as that of *Mercy Merrick,* the principles that ought to govern society in its treatment of persons reclaimed from a vicious life. But, as things really are, the question is one that must be left to individual judgment. Furthermore, in one aspect of the subject, neither the individual nor the world can avail to regenerate the soul that has once drifted into sin. Every wound leaves its scar. *Mercy Merrick* is not the only human creature who cries out, in the bitterness of despair, "I can't get back!" No remorse, no repentance, no atonement will again make white and pure the spirit that sin has polluted.

From a Photograph by Sarony. *In the Collection of the Author.*

CLARA MORRIS
as
Mercy Merrick, in "The New Magdalen."

Wilkie Collins himself has enforced that truth, in what he makes *Rosanna Spearman* say, to old *Betteredge,* in "The Moonstone,"—"The stain is taken off, but the place shows."

Miss Morris's impersonation of *Mercy Merrick* was full of her passionate individuality, hysterical sensibility, and nervous force, and, in fact, was more a revelation of personal attributes than an assumption of character. In the strong scene of the Third Act she made a sudden and startling dramatic transition from the humility of grief to the icy composure of supercilious indifference and bland contempt, when brought to bay by *Grace Roseberry,* and that, and her wild intervention, to rescue and shield her enemy, were the splendid points and peculiar features of her performance. The earnest warmth of a woman's heart, tortured and struggling, was felt likewise throughout the art. The light, household manner into which it pleased Miss Morris periodically to lapse was not that of the character but of herself. The art structure of the performance was perplexed by aimless wanderings across the scene and much impulsive posturing and gesticulation, which had an angular effect, as of a person acting at haphazard and taking the chance of somehow coming out right at last. Miss Morris's dramatic art, indeed, sometimes suggested Lord Timothy Dexter's "Autobiography" in which the punctuation marks, of all sorts, are printed at the end of the book,—the reader being invited to

scatter them through the text in whatsoever manner may please him best.

"MISS MULTON."

The play called "Miss Multon" is an adaptation of a French piece which was built on the basis of the English play on the subject of Mrs. Henry Wood's novel of "East Lynne." The version thus derived is superior to the old one, being compact, pointed, smoothly written, swift in movement, and made cumulatively pathetic by a series of situations, each stronger than its predecessor. A fine point of its superiority resides in the skill with which it veils the ruinous misdeeds of its heroine, and so concentrates the attention of the spectator rather upon the consequences of sin than upon the evil and reprehensible misconduct which has made punishment inevitable, salutary, and just. The dramatist comes at once to Hecuba and presents the image of a miserable, repentant woman, who, having fled from husband, children, and home, is urged, by contrition and by strong maternal instinct, to return in disguise, and to accept a position of servitude where once she has honorably ruled. The first two acts are devoted to a statement of the relations of the persons implicated in the plot. The last three acts exhibit the experience of the unfortunate and wretched woman, when thus established in the household of the man whom she has wronged and who, free to take that

step, has married again. An added element of power and pathos is gained by making the husband cognizant of the identity of the *Miss Multon* whom he has engaged as a governess for their children. The third and fourth acts of the piece amount to a vivisection of the human heart. Trial after trial, blow after blow, agony ever changing, growing, and deepening—that is the burden of the play. A desperate avowal of the truth ensues and an afflicting death ends the fruitless endeavor to atone for wrong and to rebuild the shattered fabric of innocence and happiness.

The choice of such a dark and hopeless subject for the purpose of a domestic play was not, perhaps, judicious. A result of more than common good should be attained, in order to justify the effect that follows upon such an accumulation of miseries. The simple moral lesson of fidelity to virtue and duty scarcely requires such harrowing enforcement. Those persons, however, who need a terrible warning can find it in "Miss Multon." No voice from the pulpit ever spoke with such an effect of piteous grief and overwhelming conviction as flows from that drama.

The acting of Clara Morris in the character of the repentant wife and heartbroken mother presented the spectacle of a human being absorbed and enthralled by agony. The individuality of the actress seemed swallowed up in the identity which her imagination—acting through the heart—made real. It was a kind of acting

that had no laws and could be tried by no accepted standard. The artist felt the grief that she undertook to convey, and she allowed her expression of it to follow the current of her feeling, without heed to form or to method of utterance. Having seen her several times in the character, however, the auditor would discover that, though the mechanism was almost chaotic, she followed the same general line of action upon all occasions—which means that, the exciting cause being the same, her nature would utter itself in the same general manner. It was evident, though, that neither intellect nor artistic purpose had much to do with the result. Contortions of the body, convulsions of the face, disproportionate attitudes, extravagant gestures, spasmodic starts and changes, and indescribable wild moans and cries were commingled in that singular embodiment with moments of sweet dignity, lovely tenderness, and exalted fortitude. Over the whole effort there was the lawlessness of a genius that is a law to itself; and the effect of the effort was that of deep pathos.

There are actors who "feel" and there are actors who do not "feel," and results of "realism" are produced by both. Clara Morris was of the former class. She evinced no capacity for that intellectual isolation of herself from herself which would have enabled her at all times to regulate the expression of feeling with the absolute propriety and refinement that maintain its unbroken beauty without impairing its power. Her

exposition of the remorse that is felt by the sinner, and the torture that she suffers in living a false life under the eyes of moral resentment and implacable justice, was overwhelming in its bitter truth. The curbing of grief and of passion in the scenes of trial was accomplished with an afflicting tragic power. The expression of the strong will was intense and noble. The portraiture of the peevishness of sickness, the half imbecile tone of a wandering mind, and all the presaging denotements of mortal dissolution was startling in fidelity. The performance was a memorable reflex of the individuality of genius and an extraordinary dramatic achievement.

"THE NEW LEAH."

Another characteristic embodiment by Clara Morris was *Esther,* in "The New Leah," written by Augustin Daly, on the basis of a translation of Dr. Mosenthal's German play of "Deborah." The heroine of "The New Leah" is a Hebrew girl. She is loved by a Christian youth, and she loves him in return. For his sake she is willing to desert her friends, leave her people, and abandon her religion. He likewise purposes to forsake his home and kindred on account of his love. Their meetings are held by stealth, and usually at night. Their plan is to marry and depart into a foreign country. The scene of their loves and other experiences is a little village and its rustic neighborhood in Germany. The time is summer, in the early part of the eighteenth

century,—a period when, in some countries of Europe, the Jews were proscribed and persecuted. The fate of those lovers is pathetic, and it comes near being tragic. They are parted by the treacherous and malignant machinations of an apostate Jew. The youth is persuaded to believe that the maiden is false to him and has betrayed him for money. He breaks faith with her, and he weds another woman. On their wedding day the Jewess meets him in the churchyard, and curses him for his perfidy, after which ebullition of love turned to hatred she wanders away, a homeless and destitute outcast. Years afterward she returns to the scene of her trial and anguish, meets her former lover—now a husband and father—forgives him, and, under saddest circumstances, changes her curse into a blessing. That story, dramatically told, in four acts, excites admiration for a beautiful, passionate nature, awakens sympathy with grief cruelly inflicted and in great part patiently suffered, thrills the heart by an image of frenzy, and elevates the mind by a portrayal of saint-like yet woman-like magnanimity. A drawing of the simple, rural, domestic life of a pastoral people, touched with gentle piety, homely humor, and the commonplace, forms a background to a representative tale of love and sorrow.

Miss Morris's Jewish maiden, *Esther,* was not dazzling in ripe, dusky beauty, but she was mournfully lovely to the eye, and her picturesque loveliness was

surcharged with passionate tenderness. She did not stir the imagination, but she appealed directly to the heart; and, in the quality of sympathy—the power to captivate the feelings, apart from the satisfaction of the sense of the ideal—she was the best representative of the part that has been seen. Kate Bateman was austere, intellectual, and fierce, and at the same time she was cold. Ristori was mature, artificial, melodramatic. Marie Seebach was over-spiritual. Janauschek, fiery and superb in action, was physically massive, even cumbrous. Miss Morris was excellent in the youth, grace, softness, and fire of the tender woman, and those attributes she welded into a form at once pictorial, mournful, and weird. She made a good effect in the defiance of the mob. She greatly excited her listeners in the Curse Scene—the religious element commingling with the human. In the lovers' meeting, the scene of the repulse, and the tender passages at the close she surpassed all previous representatives of the part and entirely satisfied all its requirements. Her conquest was through the emotions. Her best moments were those of frenzy, as when love struggles in the heart with knowledge that it is wasted and in vain, made unworthy and pitiable by the unworthiness of its idol. In the character of *Esther,* in even the wildest moments, she displayed more of an artist's control of herself and her resources than in any other of her personations.

XXXVII.

LILLIE LANGTRY.

1852—19—.

Emily Charlotte Le Breton, who by her first marriage (1874) became Mrs. Edward Langtry, and by her second marriage Mrs. Hugo de Bathe, is a native of the island of Jersey and daughter of the Rev. W. C. Le Breton, deceased, formerly Dean of that ecclesiastical district. She made her first appearance on the stage, December 15, 1881, at the Haymarket Theatre, London, as *Miss Hardcastle,* in the comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer," and she became well and widely known as "the Jersey Lily."

Thirty years have passed (1912) since Mrs. Langtry made her first visit to America, appearing November 6, 1882, at Wallack's Theatre, as *Hester Grazebrook,* in "The Unequal Match." Her acting at the first was marred by self-consciousness, but it possessed distinction and it evinced dramatic aptitude. From that time onward she labored with incessant energy, essaying part after part, and not flinching from any professional test, however severe. She had experience of adversity. She did not succeed as *Rosalind* nor as *Lady*

Macbeth, although in both those exacting characters her endeavor was worthily ambitious and artistically reputable. At intervals her professional career was marked by fine achievement. She gave a brilliant performance of *Juliana,* in "The Honeymoon." She was an image of exquisite beauty and she provided an example of delicate art as *Galatea,* in Gilbert's lovely, poetic play on the Pygmalion and Galatea story, which he skilfully diversified and utilized to dramatic ends. She gave a performance of *Pauline,* in "The Lady of Lyons," which, if defective at some points, was perfect at others. Her embodiment of *Lady Clancarty,* in Tom Taylor's excellent historical drama founded on an episode of domestic experience to which the historian Macaulay had directed attention as containing the material for a play, was sprightly, spirited, diversified, noble, and touching, and if she had done nothing else her acting in that part would have sufficed to establish her reputation as a fine actress. She was not always wise in her choice of plays to be produced, and some of her ventures, at the Imperial Theatre and elsewhere, made with "society" dramas, were disastrous.

Mrs. Langtry's adoption of the stage was fortuitous. She had attracted attention as a Beauty and had become a favorite in London fashionable society. Her circumstances necessitated that she should find employment, and she resorted to the Theatre. Her choice of a pursuit was ascribed to vanity, and at the outset of her

professional career, while she did not lack the encouragement of admiring friends, she encountered opposition and was constrained to endure both censure and ridicule. Her resolute purpose, however, prevailed, meeting all obstacles in a cheerful spirit and without resentment. She was not, in a high sense, a great actress and she did not pretend to greatness, but she was possessed of inherent dramatic faculty, combined with unusual advantages of person, of physical training, and of social culture, and in seeking the Stage she followed her natural bent. She was a born actress. The crudity of her early performances was obvious, but the freshness, charm, and promise of them were equally so. In New York, from the moment when she strolled on the scene, in "The Unequal Match," no experienced observer could entertain distrust of her ability or doubt of her success. The greeting accorded to her was cordial, and she received it with gentle dignity. Her fine manner gained public favor at the outset, and although in later times she incurred and received severe criticism, that favor was never wholly lost. Victory at first was largely due to the beauty of the woman,—her well proportioned, lissome figure, shapely and finely poised head, long, oval face, pure white complexion, large gray eyes, —innocent, candid, and sweet in expression,—abundant chestnut hair, and rich, cordial, winning voice. She was incarnated health, luxuriant in vigor and bloom, imparting a joyous sense of buoyant, abounding life—the delight

that is exhaled by a field of violets or by the strong, fragrant winds of the sea. Criticism can weigh and measure such creatures of loveliness according to its frigid standards,—unquestionably wise and just,—and can be ever so sagacious in its conclusions and ever so authoritative in its expression of them, but it will never invalidate the power of beauty; that power which has ever swayed, and is ordained forever to sway, with equal cogency, the eager fancy of youth, the stern mind of manhood, and the cold composure of self-centred age: for there is a light in beauty for which the world will always turn its back on scholarship and wisdom, and for which even the most solemn philosopher, worn by study and thought and saddened by experience, would gladly barter his wearisome burden of knowledge, his sad patience, his apathy, and his thankless fame. But while victory for Mrs. Langtry was at first gained by the beauty of the woman, it was soon ratified by the achievement of the actress. It was not, at any time, such achievement as that of her thoroughly trained and exceptionally brilliant contemporaries, Madge Kendall and Ada Rehan, but it was such as put detraction to silence and won and held a large measure of public sympathy and critical respect.

"THE UNEQUAL MATCH."

The comedy, by Tom Taylor, called "The Unequal Match" illustrates the simple proposition that a wife,

in order to hold her husband's love, must continue to be as charming to him after marriage as she was before. The wife, *Hester Grazebrook,* an ingenuous, exuberant, effusive, rural beauty, has wearied her husband by her gushing simplicity, and being neglected by him she becomes, at first, wretched, then jealous, then bitterly resentful and indignant. Wounded affection is succeeded by wounded pride, as the impulse of her conduct, and she determines to harden and brighten herself, so as to compete with the most potent force of feminine rivalry. That determination she fulfils, at the sacrifice of girlish bloom, and in the sequel she recovers the love, —such as it is,—of the husband whom her uniform simplicity had annoyed and repelled. The part is readily comprehensible. A trained actress can easily make it by turns delicious, pathetic, and brilliant. An inexperienced actress could not fail, in assuming it, to reveal many charming qualities of woman's nature. Mrs. Langtry, who had played *Miss Hardcastle,* in "She Stoops to Conquer,"—a kindred part, since it depends on variety of moods and the felicitous depiction of contrast,—signified a correct ideal of *Hester Grazebrook,* and expressed it well. Her simulation of rusticity, indeed, was not thorough, nor was her passion intense, nor her grief profound. She had not then learned to conceal art by the power of absolute impersonation. Her denotement of wounded pride, on the other hand, was perfect, and as the woman of society,

coldly self-possessed, nonchalant, polished in manners, she was true, and she exercised a singular allurement.

"THE HONEYMOON."

The French philosopher Michelet, who bravely assumed to understand the subject, said that marriage always begins with a combat, in which the party who is victorious at the beginning will maintain superiority to the end. That doctrine, illustrated by Shakespeare, in "The Taming of the Shrew," and by Beaumont and Fletcher, in "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," is cleverly and poetically enforced in John Tobin's comedy of "The Honeymoon" (1805), *Duke Aranza* and his wife *Juliana* being the representative contestants. At the beginning *Juliana* is "a forward, foolish girl, full of capricious thoughts and fiery spirits": at the close she is a gentle, modest, serene, affectionate woman. Through the intermediate scenes the actress of the part must show a gradual transition from perversity and wilful arrogance to sweetly submissive humility. Tobin's play possesses this singular advantage of both "The Taming of the Shrew" and "Rule a Wife,"—of which dramas it is imitative,—that *Duke Aranza* is a gentleman, which cannot truly be said of either *Petruchio* or *Leon.* The representative of *Juliana* must be handsome and must be capable of expeditious action and innocent, demure duplicity, and she must likewise possess the characteristics of natural pride and childlike sweetness. Mrs.

Langtry, who, in America, first acted *Juliana* on November 25, 1882, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, showed herself to be a woman framed for the presentment of precisely such a part. Her appearance was beautiful. In the opening scene, when *Juliana* appears in sumptuous wedding-attire, her icy demeanor, instinct with cool, haughty self-complacence, was perfect. Petulance, vexation, anger, revolt, and sneering, taunting contempt are commingled in her mood when she is transferred to the Cottage Scene, and those emotions were expressed by the actress with decisive vim and amusing zest. The emphatic phrase,—once so familiar in theatrical circles and so often playfully quoted,—"I'll be a devil!" was convincingly spoken by her, and in the glowing outburst of resentment, at the exclamation, "Her swelling heart cries out Revenge," Mrs. Langtry employed precisely the explosive force appropriate to *Juliana's* impulsive, violent, but neither profound nor intense nature. Her subsequent transition to a fictitiously demure meekness was charming,—the hypocritical affectation being amusingly transparent, and the wheedling tone sweetly droll. The little touches of expressive by-play, in that passage, were particularly deft. In the delivery of the verse there was a delightful rippling tone of arch mischief. In *Juliana's* scene with the *Mock Duke* the supplicant demeanor and the simulation of earnest feeling were significant of rare skill, and the ill-temper, in the colloquy with *Duke Aranza* and *Lopez,* was

adroitly tinged with a sweet perplexity that seemed genuine and caused a charming effect. Each change of mood was naturally effected. In the closing scenes Mrs. Langtry's *Juliana* was invested with a bewitching air of tranquil loveliness. At her best, when she had acquired the art to conceal art, when her spirit had become as much at ease on the stage as her person, and when, prompted by keener intuition and guided by ampler experience, she had learned to show more fully the awakening of the woman's heart beneath the undeveloped girl's perverse disposition and rebellious pride, Mrs. Langtry gave a personation of *Juliana* that was well-nigh perfect.

"PYGMALION AND GALATEA."

Mrs. Langtry's impersonation of *Galatea* was first shown in New York on April 23, 1883, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. To the eye it presented a picture of classical beauty. The actress had considered that, as the statuary of Phidias was wrought in ivory and gold, and as it was long customary in Greece and Italy to paint statues in the colors of life, the image of *Galatea* could be effectively presented as flesh and blood, rather than as marble. The point is questionable. It has seemed a principal felicity of Gilbert's comedy that, in retaining for its heroine the essential characteristic of a statue, it emphasized her state of forlorn isolation from humanity, and thus heightened the effect of pathos and a cer-

tain bleak morality (as to the sorrowful plight of innocence misplaced in a world of sin and trouble) which it seems the purpose of the piece to impart. *Galatea,* a child of heaven, is in many ways unlike a mortal, and to present her as animated marble is to make that fact clear. Mrs. Langtry, however, had formed a different ideal of the character, and in the performance that she gave her ideal was firmly and evenly sustained and clearly expressed. Her *Galatea* was, from first to last, innocent, artless, childlike, and simple, and that ingenuous individuality was permeated by profound relish of physical existence and touched by a glow of unconscious playfulness, surely in the right spirit of the comedy. A lack of depth, richness, and mellowness in the elocution at passages of strong feeling was almost the only blemish upon an otherwise consistent, rounded, charming work of art; but obviously it was the intention of the actress to make *Galatea* a passionate woman and not to freight her soul with the misery of a wasted affection. The condition at first suggested was that of sweet and grave perplexity; this presently became diversified by fluctuations of ardor, terror, and dismay; and finally it rested in a mournful resignation. Perhaps the actress was right, and it may be that *Galatea* should not be shown as a woman too far removed from human sympathy by being made a poetic abstraction. Gilbert, when he first saw Mary Anderson rehearse *Galatea,* although he was favorably impressed, was not

wholly pleased, declaring that her ideal was too delicate, too much refined, higher than he intended. Mrs. Langtry's treatment of the part was consistent and the effect of it was good. Her appearance was noble. She wore a white robe, the skirt of which presented a skilful imitation of sculptured ripples, while the waist was so fashioned as to show the arms and neck. The robe was bound at the waist with a golden girdle, and there were golden fillets around the head, which appeared with its natural hair, the genuine red gold of Mary Stuart tresses,—one of Mrs. Langtry's exceptional beauties. Her stage business when the statue comes to life was skilful and appropriate, and throughout the performance there were repose of manner and breadth of movement. The comic colloquy with *Chrysos,*—admirably acted by Frederick Everill, whose facial expression, unconscious humor, expressive vocalism, and natural delicacy made him excellent in that pompously absurd character,—passed amid a low murmur of laughter. Katharine Rogers, appearing as *Cynisca,* made that severe woman a prominent figure in the representation and brought out the elocutionary effects with fire and vigor. The preservation of a suitable resemblance between the statue and the wife who was *Pygmalion's* model was a particularly commendable merit of Mrs. Langtry's revival of the play.

"THE LADY OF LYONS."

Mrs. Langtry appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on October 18, 1886, as *Pauline,* in Bulwer's clever but now practically discarded comedy of "The Lady of Lyons," which was set in picturesque scenery, richly embellished, and every part in which was dressed with scrupulous fidelity to the fashion of its time. The original text had also been improved by judicious excisions. That old comedy can easily be ridiculed—and often has been—but when it is finely acted it arouses and holds the sympathy of an audience, it imparts pure, gentle, chivalrous feeling, love of right and hatred of wrong, and it causes a strong and good effect. Mrs. Langtry's impersonation of *Pauline,* physically, was beautiful: in her delicate, embroidered gowns, with her haughty head, aristocratic figure, cold face, and proud bearing, she completely filled the ideal of frigid, unapproachable loveliness; but the impersonation viewed as the revealment of a woman's heart, torn and tortured by the conflict of love and pride, or viewed, technically, as a piece of acting, left the feelings almost quiescent and the sense of artistic completeness and symmetry unsatisfied. It was deficient in passion, innate nobility, and sustained aristocracy of character. *Pauline* begins to reveal the depth of her nature, in the expressive speech to *Melnotte* about the moths that are caught by the glare. Beneath her mood, at that moment,

there is a profound perception of the possibility of misery always attendant on the bestowal of a woman's love. That depth of emotion was not indicated by Mrs. Langtry. In the first scene in the cottage her sustainment of the ordeal of the discovery of *Melnotte's* treachery, instead of being continuous and cumulative, was broken, fragmentary, and spasmodic. The quality of the sarcasm was unrefined. Much of the time the actress concealed her face and turned her back on the audience. Those expedients may, at times, be good art, but they do not prove effective in that situation. In the second scene at the cottage the reception of *Beauséant* requires a formidable dignity, and the delivery of the speech about "a husband's roof" needs intense feeling and much vocal force. Indeed, to fill those situations an actress must possess or simulate extraordinary and overwhelming passion. Sensibility, however ardent, will not sustain the illusion required in them, nor satisfy the aroused sympathies of an auditor. Parts of the acting of Mrs. Langtry, on the other hand, were exceptionally felicitous. Her expression of momentary pique toward *Damas,*—her withdrawal from him of the flower that she had just given to him,—was excellent. Through all the lighter passages, indeed, she passed easily, and throughout the performance her ideal of the character was seen to have been well considered and completely formed, if not invariably correct. The essential element wanting in it was that of deep

feeling, but it was impossible not to recognize with admiration the beauty and charming manner of the woman and the authority and skill of the actress.

"LADY CLANCARTY."

Mrs. Langtry's first appearance in New York as *Lady Clancarty* was made on April 25, 1887, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Her personality and aspect in that capital character—the figure, the face, the adornment, the carriage, the demeanor, the pervasive and controlling condition—were as completely satisfying to the sense of beauty as any stage image possibly could be, while her dramatic denotement of the feeling of the character was frankly and sweetly impetuous and was restrained and guided by excellent discretion and taste,—so that she produced the total result of good acting, which is to create an absolute illusion of reality, and convey an irresistible sense of sincerity and power, in a manner that is apparently spontaneous.

The play of "Lady Clancarty" was first produced on March 9, 1874, at the Olympic Theatre, London, with Ada Cavendish and Henry Neville in the two leading characters. Its first representation in America occurred in Boston. Mrs. Langtry's revival of it surpassed all previous local productions of it, in accuracy and beauty of scenery and dresses. The piece affords a remarkable opportunity for instructive as well as pleasing stage pictures. The opening scene—a tavern in

From a Photograph by Falk. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

MRS. LANGTRY.

Romney Marsh, a region adjacent to one of the Cinque Ports on the English Channel—can, of course, be treated more or less according to the caprice of romantic fancy, but most of the subsequent scenes are laid in historic places,—the old Palace at Kensington, the old Gate House Prison, at Westminster (which figures in Thackeray's novel of "Henry Esmond"), and the old Palace of Whitehall. Mrs. Langtry faithfully respected the essential need of historic accuracy in the chief details of those pictures. The tapestries, the hangings, the pictured panels, the painted ceilings, the massive, sombre wainscots of oak, the Dutch flower pieces, and the dusky portraits that were used to embellish the Cabinet of *Portland* and the Closet of *King William* were strictly harmonious with the taste and usage of those times,—and such adjuncts serve to arouse the imagination and instruct the mind. The bed-chamber of *Lady Clancarty* was suggestive of rooms in the old Kensington Palace that are associated with Queen Anne.

No character has been added to stage literature within recent years which contains more of the woman nature than is found in *Lady Clancarty.* She is a lovely woman who fondly loves, and who saves her lover's life by her passionate devotion to him—setting at work machinery of safeguard which else had slumbered. She is not a complex character and there is no subtlety in her composition or her conduct. At only one moment in the author's delineation of her is she indicated as under

the strain of a conflict of perplexed and opposed emotions,—the moment when she finds herself attracted by the ardent stranger who woos her for her husband, whom she has not seen since they were wedded as boy and girl, and who is her husband, although she does not know it. This troubled mood, however, is not difficult to understand. Indeed, the characteristic of the part is elemental feeling, and, probably, that was one reason for Mrs. Langtry's marked success in it.

Delight in a natural and pure love,—beset, indeed, by perils but sanctioned by duty not less than passion,—is the dominant force of *Lady Clancarty's* being and the main impulse of her every word and deed. Womanhood, as typified by that heroine, neither assumes heroic proportions nor aspires to them. Her supreme achievement is to show the exultant happiness, the honest transport, that a sweet and ardent woman may feel when the man whom she loves is at length given into her arms, and to express her passionate sense of a wife's right and duty when her husband is in deadly peril from his enemies. She is born and bred a lady, in the old Stuart days (the period of the piece being 1696, when there was a plot on foot to extirpate the Prince of Orange and restore King James), and the representative of her must possess both manner, which comes of innate refinement, and manners, which come of cultivation. Mrs. Langtry possessed those qualifications, in no common degree.

Still more, in the excellent situation of the Third Act, —where the drama culminates,—she showed herself capable of acting and speaking straight from the heart, and of making the simple accents of nature puissant and predominant.

MRS. LANGTRY'S CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

"THE DEGENERATES."

"On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
That Jews might kiss and Infidels adore."

Both these classes, and some others, were present in force at the Garden Theatre, New York, on January 15, 1900, when Mrs. Langtry, radiant with health and superb with congruous apparel, emerged in Mr. Sidney Grundy's edifying play of "The Degenerates," and touchingly embodied the character of a repentant sinner and moral guide. On several previous occasions, when this gifted and lovely woman had illumined the American Theatre,—notably when she acted the bewitched and bewitching heroine of "A Wife's Peril," as well as the other characters already mentioned,—her attitude was that of an actress, and it was possible to take a purely professional view of her efforts. On this occasion she came forth as the friend of virtue and the advocate and exemplar of heroic self-sacrifice for the salvation of the domestic altar, and all that gratitude and admiration could do, under those sacred circumstances, was to twine her honored brows with the

laurel appertaining unto philanthropic humanity. This time there could be no question of mere acting—for Beauty, which "draws us with a single hair," was freighted with a "lesson" and equipped with a precept, and nothing remained but abject submission, with a pure heart and an humble voice, testamentary to the power of saving grace. The "lesson" was that a reformed female rake makes the best wife, and the precept was that a regenerated courtesan is just as much entitled as a regenerated libertine to the recognition and respect of society. Those sublime truths were not absolutely new, for the missionary labors of good Mrs. Kendal and pious Olga Nethersole,—incidentally setting forth the lack of caloric in the *First Mrs. Tanqueray* and the superabundance of it in the *Second,*—had frequently announced them; but perhaps they had never before been proclaimed with the puissant weight of authority and the convincing force that invested them in Mrs. Langtry's presentment of the case of *Mrs. Trevelyan,* in "The Degenerates." Old-fogy notions die hard,—particularly with those wretched reactionists who think that a violet is brighter and sweeter in its first bloom than it is after it has been blighted, but, upon a suitable study of Mrs. Langtry's exposition of intrepid womanhood, it seemed very little likely that any moralist would ever again be stimulated to extol either the early vegetable or the opening rose.

The case of *Mrs. Trevelyan* could have been stated more briefly than Mr. Sidney Grundy stated it in his play: Dr. Johnson's explicit reply to Boswell, when consulted as to the lady who was at variance with her husband, provides a useful hint: but the fancy naturally lingers upon a delicious theme. *Mrs. Trevelyan* lived in London, and, having loved not wisely but too well,—and too often,—she had been divorced from her irrational husband, and left free to occupy herself in an amatory intrigue with a married baronet, named *Samaurez.* Thus employed she soon obtained the proud satisfaction of driving the wife of *Samaurez* into a frenzy of jealous rage and causing that illiberal woman to resolve on a revengeful elopement with a dissolute lover, named *Lorano.* Just as her noble industry was about to be rewarded in that catastrophe, however, she suddenly became aware of a profound tenderness for her daughter, *Una,* fresh from boarding-school, and thereupon she repented of her dalliance with *Samaurez* (and of every other sin in the devil's calendar), and became a ministering angel to his impulsive and precipitate wife. *Lady Samaurez,* having sought the protection of *Lorano* and been repelled by that voluptuary, was about to be discovered, by her husband, in *Lorano's* bedroom, but, while she escaped down the back stairs, the intrepid *Mrs. Trevelyan* took her place and calmly confronted both *Samaurez* and an ignominious predicament. That exhibition of moral heroism touched the heart of a

nobleman named *Orme,* who happily comprehended the emergency and the adroit self-sacrifice, and that lord was so delighted with *Mrs. Trevelyan's* practical Christianity and so indifferent to spring greens that he asked her to become his wife. In this way it was shown that the maternal instinct, when a woman of fashion happens to remember her babes, will convert a licentious Degenerate into a Saint, and that when such a woman has become a saint she is abundantly qualified to wear a coronet and to lead a degenerate society. Nothing could be broader, more charitable, or more helpful than these doctrines, and, in the existing state of the fashionable world, it is a great comfort to have them so beautifully and convincingly presented as they were by Mrs. Langtry. Only a week earlier, in New York,—according to the newspaper report of the deplorable facts,—an offended husband who had hidden himself under the marital couch, in order to baffle a too solicitous suitor for his wife's affection, abruptly issuing from his concealment, at an opportune time, smote upon the licentious Degenerate with a bed-slat, and nearly killed him. How much better it would have been to make a play out of such incidents, instead of resorting to mere brute violence! Everybody knows that as long as your "lesson" is fair the means by which you teach it may be, and ought to be, radically foul. The only way to instruct and really benefit human beings, when you can entice them into a theatre, is to inculcate

a good precept, with examples drawn from a social pigsty. This process shows life as it actually is and brings the truth home to the human heart, and every spectator is ennobled, cheered, and refreshed. In the miserable bed-slat case, where a fine opportunity, obviously, was wasted, there were, to be sure, aggravating circumstances; for the Degenerate, a person named Bosky, had dyed his whiskers, and no husband, probably, could be expected to endure patiently the machinations of an elderly libertine variegated with green and purple hair. Indeed, the magistrate who adjudicated upon the case, Gammer, J., impressively remarked that "a man who dyes his hair has a false heart." In Mr. Grundy's more select group of Degenerates the presence of hair-dye was not remarked, and of course the spectator was so distant that he could not detect the odor of patchouly. But it is a sweet play, and it did a power of good.

Mr. Grundy's drama (to speak of it in earnest for one brief moment) is scarcely more than a sketch-like study of character, woven round a single situation. It is unsubstantial, but it contains ample knowledge of the bad side of half fashionable, half Bohemian, almost wholly vulgar social life, together with abundance of small talk, now frivolous and now pertly pungent, punctuated with cynical commentary, and jewelled all over with those droll, caustic half-lines and happy monosyllables which are so fortunate for a comedian and

which tell so well in a colloquy: and it culminates in one effective scene, in which, after the fashion of the Old English Comedies of the Restoration, the right woman is discovered in the wrong place. Mrs. Langtry, as *Mrs. Trevelyan,* had a part which enabled her to descant upon her own temperament and, to some extent, upon her own experience of fortune's vicissitudes and the world's injustice and empty gabble; but it is a part that reaches no height of emotion and it only enlisted her skill in the half-humorous, half-satirical expression of a gay's woman's levity and mischief. The indications of a kind heart and a cheerful disposition were numerous, and at one point there was a sudden wave of earnest feeling, while the evenly sustained and effortless fluency of the representation made it natural. The dramatic power of the occasion centred in Frederick Kerr's delightfully spontaneous presentment of *Orme.* The man of the world,—well bred, distinguished, astute, sagacious, far-sighted, tolerant, kindly,—whom experience has taught but has not spoiled, could not have been more truthfully embodied. Admirable ease of manner and a sustained charm of attractive personality made this a rare triumph in the art of acting. The mind of the author had been expended more on this character than on all its auxiliaries, and Mr. Kerr's assumption of it,—perfect in characterization, distinct in articulation, crisp with precision and easy with invariable grace,—caused a delightful effect of natural

acting. Mr. Grundy's play of "The Degenerates" is at once clever and deplorable, because it treats an obnoxious theme with reckless humor and in a vivacious style, and thus commends it to popular favor. Just as ridicule is one of the most fatal weapons that can be used to assail good repute, so sportive wit is one of the most effective instruments that can be employed to perplex the sense of right and wrong, to unsettle moral principles, and to make virtue and refinement seem prudery and affectation.

XXXVIII.

EDWARD SMITH WILLARD.

"THE MIDDLEMAN."

Edward Smith Willard made his first appearance on the American Stage at Palmer's Theatre, New York (now, 1912, Wallack's Theatre), November 10, 1890, in the powerful play of "The Middleman," by Henry Arthur Jones, and the greeting that hailed him was that of earnest respect. Willard had long been known and esteemed, in New York, by the dramatic profession and by those persons who habitually observe the changing aspects of the contemporary Stage on both sides of the ocean, but to the American public his name had been comparatively strange. The sentiment of kindness with which he was received deepened into admiration as the night wore on, and before the last curtain fell upon his performance of *Cyrus Blenkarn* he had gained an unequivocal and auspicious victory. In no instance has the first American appearance of a new actor been accompanied by a clearer exemplification of simple worth, and in no case has its conquest of public enthusiasm been more decisive. Not the least impressive feature of the occasion was the

steadily increasing surprise of the audience as the performance proceeded. It was this actor's way to build slowly, and at the opening of the piece the poor inventor's blind ignorance of the calamity that is impending is chiefly trusted to create sympathy. Through those moments of approaching sorrow the sweet unconsciousness of the loving father was expressed by Willard with touching truth. In that he astonished even as much as he pleased his auditors,—because they were not expecting it.

One of the most exquisite enjoyments provided by the Stage is the advent of a new actor who is not only new but good. It is the pleasure of discovery. It is the pleasure of contact with a rich mind hitherto unexplored. The personal appearance, the power of the eye, the variety of the facial expression, the tones of the voice, the carriage of the person, the salient attributes of the individual character, the altitude of the intellectual development, the quality of the spirit, the extent and the nature of those artistic faculties and resources which constitute the professional equipment, —all those things become the subject first of interested inquiry and next of pleased recognition. Willard, as first revealed to our public, was neither of the stately, the weird, the mysterious, nor the ferocious order of actor. There was nothing in him of either *Werner, Manfred,* or *Sir Giles Overreach.* He did not suggest the tradition of either John Kemble or Edmund Kean.

His personality, nevertheless, was of a distinctive, interesting kind. He showed the self-poise and the exalted calm of immense reserve power and of tender and tremulous sensibility perfectly controlled. His acting was conspicuously marked by two of the loveliest attributes of art,—simplicity and sincerity. He concealed neither the face nor the heart. His figure was fine and his demeanor that of vigorous mental authority informed by moral purity and by the self-respect of a manly spirit. Goodness, although a quality seldom taken into the critical estimate, nevertheless has its part in spiritual constitution and in consequent effect. It was, for instance, an element of artistic potency in John McCullough. It operated spontaneously, and just so it did in the acting of Willard, who, first of all, gave the satisfying impression of being genuine. A direct and thorough method of expression naturally accompanies that order of mind and that quality of temperament. Every movement that Willard made was clear, free, open, firm, and of an obvious significance. Every tone of his rich and resonant voice was distinctly intended and was distinctly heard. There were no "flaws and starts." He had formed a precise ideal. He knew exactly how to embody and to utter it, and he made the manifestation of it sharp, defined, positive, and cogent. His meaning could not be missed. He was seen to possess an unerring sense of proportion and symmetry. The character that he first represented,

Cyrus Blenkarn, is, indeed, shown by the dramatist all at once as a unique identity, but it is not all at once developed, the manifestation of it being made gradually to proceed under the stress of experience and of emotion. The actor rose with the occasion. His feelings were deep, and he manifested extraordinary power for the utterance of them,—not simply vocal power, although that was exceptional, but the rare faculty of seeming to become convulsed by passion, and of being swept along by it, and of sweeping along his hearers. His manner covered, without concealing, great intensity. Such a combination of traits must have existed,—if the old records are read aright,—in that famous actor John Henderson, and they certainly existed in Edward L. Davenport and James W. Wallack, the Younger. It has, however, always been rare on the stage, and, like all rare jewels, it is precious. The actor who, from an habitual mood of sweet gravity and patient gentleness, can rise to the height of delirious passion, and there sustain himself at a poise of tempestuous concentration which is the fulfilment of nature, and never once seem either ludicrous or extravagant, is an actor of splendid power and extraordinary self-discipline. Such an actor was Edward Willard. The blue eyes, the slightly olive complexion, the compact person, the picturesque appearance, the melodious voice, the flexibility of natural action, and the gradual, easy ascent from the calm level of domestic peace to the

stormy summit of passionate ecstasy recalled personal peculiarities and artistic methods seldom displayed.

In the drama of "The Middleman" Willard had to impersonate an inventor, of the absorbed, enthusiastic, self-regardless, fanatical kind. *Cyrus Blenkarn* is a potter. His genius and his toil have enriched two persons, named *Chandler,* father and son, who own and conduct a porcelain factory, in an English town, of the present day. *Blenkarn* has two daughters, and one of them is taken from him by the younger *Chandler.* The circumstances of that deprivation point at disgrace, and the inventor conceives himself to have suffered an odious and irreparable wrong. *Young Chandler* has departed and so has *Mary Blenkarn,* and they are eventually to return as husband and wife; but *Cyrus Blenkarn* has been aroused from his reveries over the crucible and furnace,—wherein he is striving to discover a lost secret in the potter's art that will make him both rich and famous,—and he utters a prayer for vengeance on those *Chandlers,* and he parts from them. A time of destitution and of pitiful struggle with dire necessity, sleepless grief, and the maddening impulse of vengeance then comes upon him, so that he is wasted almost to death. He will not, however, abandon his quest for the secret of his art. He may die of hunger and grief; he will not yield. At the last moment of his trial and his misery—alone—at night—in the alternate lurid blaze and murky gloom of his firing-house—success is

attained: the secret is found. That climax, to which the preliminaries gradually and artfully lead, affords a great opportunity to an actor, and Willard greatly filled it. The old inventor has been bowed down almost to despair. Sorrow and destitution, the sight of his remaining daughter's poverty, and the conflict of many feelings have made him a wreck; but his will remains firm. It is not, however, until his last hope has been abandoned that his success suddenly comes,—and the result of this is a delirium. That situation, one of the best in modern drama, has been treated by the author in such a manner as to sustain for a long time the feeling of suspense and to put an enormous strain upon the emotion and the resources of an actor, and, when completely utilized, profoundly to agitate the feelings of an auditory. Willard's presentment of the gaunt, haggard, attenuated figure of *Cyrus Blenkarn,*—almost insane with grief and joy,—was the complete incarnation of a dramatic frenzy; and this, being sympathetic, and moving to goodness and not to evil, captured the heart. It was a magnificent exhibition not alone of the physical force that sometimes is so essential in acting, but of that fervor of the soul without which acting is a mockery.

The skill with which Willard reserved his power, so that the impersonation might gradually increase in strength, was one of the best merits of his art. *Blenkarn's* prayer might readily be converted into the climax

of the piece, and it might readily be spoken in such a way that no effect would be left for the culmination in the crucial scene in the firing-house. Those errors were avoided, and during three out of the four acts the movement of the piece was fluent, continuous, and cumulative. In this respect both the drama and the performance were instructive. Henry Arthur Jones has diversified his serious scenes with passages of sportive humor and he has freighted the piece with conventional didacticism as to the well-worn question of capital and labor. The humor is excellent: the political economy is obscure. The value of the play does not reside in its teaching but in its dramatic presentation of strong character, individual experience, and significant story. The effect produced by "The Middleman" is that of moral elevation. In the purpose that presides over human destiny,—if we accept the testimony equally of history and of fiction,—it appears to be necessary first to create strong characters and then to break them, and the manner in which they are broken usually involves the elements alike of dramatic effect and of pathos. That singular fact in mortal experience may have been noticed by the dramatist. His drama is a forcible exposition of it. "The Middleman" was set on the stage in such a way as to strengthen dramatic illusion by fidelity of scenery. The firing-house, with its furnaces in operation, was a copy of what can be seen at Worcester. The picture of English life was true.

"JUDAH."

When Willard played the part of *Judah Llewellyn* for the first time in America, December 29, 1890, at Palmer's Theatre, he gained a verdict of emphatic admiration. *Judah Llewellyn* is a good part in a striking play,—a play that tells an interesting and significant story by expressive, felicitous, incessant action; affects the feelings by situations that are vital with dramatic power; inspires useful thought upon a theme of psychological importance; cheers the mind with a fresh breeze of satirical humor, and delights the instinct of taste by its crisp and pungent style. Alike by his choice of a comparatively original subject and his deft method in the treatment of it Henry Arthur Jones showed a fine dramatic instinct; and equally in the evolution of character and the expression of experience and emotion he wrought with feeling and vigor. Most of the plays that are written, in any given period, pass away with the period to which they appertain. "Judah" should prove an exception; for its brilliantly treated theme is one of perennial interest, and there seems reason to believe, of a work so vital, that long after the present generation has vanished it will keep its place in the Theatre.

The theme is the psychic force in human organism. The author does not obtrude it; does not play the pedant with it; does not lecture on it, and above all does not bore with it. He only uses it, and he has been

so true to his province as a dramatist and not an advocate that he never assumes to decide on any question of doctrine that may be involved in the assertion of it. His heroine is a young woman who thinks herself to be possessed of a certain inherent restorative power of curing the sick. This power is of psychic origin and it operates through the medium of personal influence. The girl, *Vashti Dethick,* has exerted her power with some success. Other persons, having felt its good effect, have admitted its existence. The father of *Vashti,* an enterprising scamp, has thereupon compelled the girl to trade upon her peculiar faculty; little by little to assume miraculous powers; and finally to pretend that her celestial talent is refreshed and strengthened by abstinence from food, and that her cures are wrought only after she has fasted for many days. He has thus converted her into an impostor; yet, as her heart is pure and her moral principle naturally sound, she is ill at ease in this false position, and her mental distress has suddenly become aggravated, almost to the pitch of desperation, by the arrival of love. She has lost her heart to a young clergyman, *Judah Llewellyn,* the purity of whose spirit and the beauty of whose life are a bitter and burning rebuke to her enforced deceitfulness of conduct. Here is a woman innocently guilty, suddenly aroused by love, made sensitive and noble (as that passion commonly makes those persons who really feel it), and projected into a condition of aggrieved

excitement. In this posture of romantic and pathetic circumstances the crisis of two lives is suddenly precipitated in action.

Judah Llewellyn also is possessed of spiritual sensibility and psychic force. In boyhood a shepherd, he has dwelt among the mountains of his native Wales, and his imagination has heard the voices that are in rocks and trees, in the silence of lonely places, in the desolation of the bleak hills, and in the cold light of distant stars. He is now a preacher, infatuated with his mission, inspired in his eloquence, invincible in his tremendous sincerity. He sees *Vashti* and he loves her. It is the first thrill of mortal passion that ever has mingled with his devotion to his religious work. The attraction between these creatures is human; and yet it is more of heaven than of earth. It is a tie of spiritual kindred that binds them. They are beings of a kind different from the common order,—and, as happens in such cases, they will be tried by exceptional troubles and passed through a fire of mortal anguish. For what reason experience should commonly take the direction of misery with fine natures in human life no philosopher has yet been able to ascertain, but that it does take that direction all competent observation proves. To *Vashti* and *Judah* the time speedily comes when their love is acknowledged, upon both sides—the preacher speaking plainly; the girl, conscious of turpitude, shrinking from a spoken avowal which yet her whole person-

ality proclaims. Yielding to her father's malign will, she has consented to make one more manifestation of curative power, to go through once more,—and for the last time,—the mockery of a pretended fast. The scene is *Lord Asgarby's* house; the patient is *Lord Asgarby's* daughter,—an only child, cursed with constitutional debility, the foredoomed victim of premature decline. This frail creature has heard of *Vashti* and believes in her, and desires and obtains her society. To the father, *Professor Dethick,* this is a golden opportunity, and he insists that the starvation test shall be thoroughly made. *Lord Asgarby,* willing to do anything for his idolized daughter, assents to the plan, and his scientific friend, cynical *Professor Jopp,* agrees, with the assistance of his erudite daughter, to supervise the experiment. *Vashti* will fast for several days, and the heir of *Asgarby* will then be healed by her purified and exalted influence.

The principal scene of the play shows the exterior of an ancient, unused tower of Asgarby House, in which *Vashti* is detained during the fast. The girl is supposed to be starving. Her scampish father will endeavor to relieve her. *Miss Jopp* is vigilant to prevent fraud. The patient is confident. *Judah,* wishful to be near to the object of his adoration, has climbed the outer wall and is watching, beneath the window, unseen, in the warder's seat. The time is summer, the hour midnight, and the irrevocable vow of love has been spoken. At

that supreme instant, and under conditions so natural that the picture seems one of actual life, the sin of *Vashti* is revealed and the man who had adored her as an angel knows her for a cheat. With a difference of circumstances that situation—in the fibre of it—is not new: many a lover, male and female, has learned that every idol has its flaw: but the situation was new in its dramatic structure. For *Judah* the discovery is a terrible one, and the resultant agony is convulsive and lamentable. He takes, however, the only course he could be expected to take: he must vindicate the integrity of the woman whom he loves, and he commits the crime of perjury in order to shield her reputation from disgrace.

What will a man do for the woman whom he loves? The attributes of individual character are always to be considered as forces likely to modify passion and to affect conduct. But in general the answer to that question may be given in three words—anything and everything! The history of nations, as of individuals, is never rightly read until it is read in the light of knowledge of the influence that has been exerted over them by women. Cleopatra, in ancient Egypt, changed the history of Rome by the ruin of Marc Antony. So goes the world. In *Judah,* however, the crime that is done for love is pursued to its consequence of ever-accumulative suffering, until at length, when it has been expiated by remorse and repentance, it is rectified

by confession and obliterated by pardon. No play ever conveyed a salutary truth with more cogent dramatic force. The incidental cynical, humorous scenes are delightful.

Willard's representation of *Cyrus Blenkarn* stamped him as one of the best actors of the age. His representation of *Judah Llewellyn* deepened that impression and reinforced it with a conviction of marked versatility. In his utterance of passion Willard showed that he had advanced far beyond the *Romeo* stage. The love that he expressed was that of a man—intellectual, spiritual, noble, a moral being and one essentially true. Man's love, when it is real, adores its object; hallows it; invests it with celestial attributes, and beholds it as a part of heaven. That quality of reverence was distinctly conveyed by the actor, and, therefore, to observers who conceive passion to be sensual abandonment (of which any animal is capable), his ardor might have seemed dry and cold. It was, nevertheless, true. He made the tempestuous torrent of *Judah's* avowal the more overwhelming by his preliminary self-repression and his thoughtful gentleness of reserve; for thus the hunger of desire was beautiful with devotion and tenderness; and while the actor's feelings seemed borne away upon a whirling tide of irresistible impulse his exquisite art kept a perfect control of face, voice, person, demeanor, and delivery, and not once permitted a lapse into extravagance. The embodiment was a memorable image

of dignity, sweetness, moral enthusiasm, passionate fervor, and intellectual power; but, also, viewed as an effort in the art of acting, it was a type of excelling grace, a beautiful personification of a noble ideal clearly conceived. The effect of spiritual suffering, as conveyed in the pallid countenance and ravaged figure, in the last act, was that of perfect pathos. The delivery of all the speeches of the broken, humiliated, haunted minister was deeply touching, not alone in music of voice but in denotement of knowledge of human nature and human suffering and endurance. The actor who can play such a part in such a manner is not an experimental artist. Rather let him be called,—in the expressive words of the poet Milnes:—

> "Sacred historian of the heart
> And moral nature's lord."

"JOHN NEEDHAM'S DOUBLE."

In dealing, for a dramatic result, with the evil deeds of man, the dramatist can probe and portray the human nature of the criminal, as Shakespeare did in the stupendous tragedy of "Macbeth," or he can concentrate his art upon situation, and content himself with depicting the manner and the details of the crime. In the former case his play will possess imaginative and psychical interest, and will diffuse a spectator's thoughts over the whole broad subject of good and evil. In the latter it will arouse the interest of absorbed

attention and horror-stricken suspense. It is the latter course that was followed by Joseph Hatton in the construction of his melodrama of "John Needham's Double," and a practical, cogent incentive to the effect thus indicated,—which is a feeling compounded of eager curiosity, shocked and startled perception, and feverish wonder and excitement,—was the dramatic means that he employed. "John Needham's Double" had its first representation on any stage February 4, 1891, in Palmer's Theatre, New York. The play is ingenious in mechanism. It arouses and sustains a painful anxiety. It enthralls the spectator's attention. It is written in a nervous, fluent style, and it contains no particle either of the dulness of didacticism or the tediousness of literary vanity. A thread not precisely of humor but of vivacious spirit runs through it, and so it is not unduly saturated with the sombre color that commonly invests the stage picture of crime.

Attention centres on the crime of murder. There are two men who bear to each other a resemblance so exact that not only casual acquaintances but even old friends and close relatives might mistake the one for the other. *Norbury* is a country squire, genial, comfortable, serene, living only to do good, and loved by all who know him. He is a widower, but his only sister resides with him, and is tenderly devoted to his welfare. *Needham* is a man of business, resident in London, an ambitious, unscrupulous man, to whom money is a

god and who lives for power. Those men are superficially alike, and chance brings them together at a moment of such supreme significance in the fortunes of each that it proves fatal to both. *Norbury* has just inherited a fortune in America, which he must cross the ocean to obtain. *Needham* has met with disasters, has resorted to forgery in order to save his credit, is financially ruined, and now stands on the verge of bankruptcy, exposure, and the penalty for crime. At this crisis *Norbury* and *Needham* meet, and out of their close resemblance to each other springs a momentary intimacy. Momentary though it be, however, it is sufficient to seal the fate of *Norbury* and to accomplish the damnation of *Needham*. The one man is simple, credulous, confiding; the other, specious, concentrated, desperate, cruel. *Norbury,* already separated from his home, and now in London and about to embark for America, tells his story to *Needham,* and so puts himself into the hands of an assassin. On the night before the day appointed for his sailing he is lured to *Needham's* home and there he is murdered. In the morning his body is found, and it is supposed to be that of *Needham,* dead by his own hand. *Needham,* meanwhile, has become *Norbury,* and in that character he assumes and accomplishes the dead man's mission. But *Norbury's* sister, who has seen the murder in a dream, will not be satisfied. She follows to America, to seek her brother; she confronts the impostor; and, although at

first startled and perplexed as to the resemblance, she beats down his guard at last, by producing his mother to establish his identity; and thereupon,—to escape that final test and not to break the heart of his mother whom, alone, out of all the world, the villain loves,—he swallows poison and so dies.

The play consists of three acts. In Act One you look upon the cheerful country home of *Norbury,* and upon the man himself, surrounded by friends and comforts. It is the time of roses and all the world seems consecrated to beauty. Into that picture comes the figure of *John Needham,* and from that moment there is a chill in the air. Early in the act the author has touched a note of omen, and, iterated by subtle devices, that undertone of dark presentiment thenceforward goes sounding on, with its presage of impending peril that no one will heed. In the Second Act you see the foredoomed *Norbury* departing from his London hotel, on the last walk that he is ever to take, and a little later you see him welcomed by *Needham* in his lonely home, and suddenly and savagely put to death; and then you see *"Norbury,"* impersonated by his assassin, re-enter his hotel and resume his interrupted life. Willard played both *Norbury* and *Needham,* changing from one to the other with great celerity, and, while maintaining the likeness, discriminating between the two individualities with a subtlety and precision that were marvellous. Once, at the moment before the murder, the two men

are together upon the stage; but it is in a dimly-lighted room and adroit use of a double was made for obtainment of the needful effect.

Willard could singularly blend the cynic with the saint. As *Blenkarn* and *Judah* he presented characters prompted by goodness. As *John Needham* he presented a character of such baleful and sinister depravity as well might chill the blood,—for, in its fidelity, its infernal wickedness, and its gaunt, grisly power, it conveyed suggestions of the possible evil in human nature that were almost too horrible for thought. Not often in a long experience of the acted drama has such an image been seen of implacable evil and stealthy and fatal doom as Willard presented when, in the character of *Needham,* he was awaiting his victim in the dark and lonely house,—from which all but himself had departed, and in which the sudden sound of the bell only served to make the solitude more desolate and the danger more grim. A little later, and in violent and striking contrast with that scene of shuddering horror, you saw the same man, in his light, genial, specious mood of rosy benignity,—under which, all the while, lurked an icy and devilish craft,—getting point by point that investiture with another man's identity which was to make his duplicity victorious, and give him, in a new world, a new career, built on murder and theft. Would such a man weaken and surrender at the sound of his mother's voice? It seems unlikely, yet it is not impossible.

Willard impersonated *Needham* in such a manner as to suggest a strain of weakness in his nature. It was a performance of extraordinary variety and force. The concentration with which it sustained intense mental excitement is a virtue possible only where there is a commanding brain, a puissant will, and a great reserve of self-command.

The weakness of *Needham* shows itself at last in the unnerved tension of an apprehensive mind. Fine intelligence suffers, and suffers as much as tender sensibility. Such a man as Willard made *John Needham* to be would know his polluted state, in all its hideous depravity, and in all the horror of predestinate retribution. The gradual subsidence of vitality was indicated with excellent skill. As one peril succeeds to another, and his fatal secret is struggling to escape, the wretched man has recourse to brandy. It is the old story of human frailty vainly defiant of eternal law, established and operant in the human soul. The subtlety with which Willard perceived that and the ease with which he expressed it were superb. Treated in that way, a melodramatic character was invested with the unusual dignity of tragical significance.

"THE PROFESSOR'S LOVE STORY."

Objection to many theatrical compositions that relate to quaint and gentle character, pastoral incident, sentimental experience, and the common occurrences of

everyday life is the natural objection of vivacious taste against things that are trite, insipid, and dull. It is not simplicity of subject that so often makes the domestic play a burden; it is mawkish treatment. In "The Professor's Love Story," by J. M. Barrie, a simple theme is treated in a light and free manner,—with the vigor of a bright mind, deep tenderness of feeling, exquisite delicacy, a keen sense of character, piquant humor, grace of style, and frequent dramatic effect. Nothing will ever seem inappropriate on the stage that comes accredited with virtues like those; and all the more welcome was that sweet, pure, refined, sparkling drama because interpreted by an actor whose exceptional powers, abundant equipment, and ample experience had placed him in the front rank of his profession.

Willard's most conspicuous early stage triumphs were gained in evil and sinister characters. It is remarkable of him that he acted with equal facility parts that repel sympathy and parts that enchain it. He possessed, in a marked and extraordinary degree, the power of *impersonation.* In "The Professor's Love Story" the character that he assumed, *Professor Goodwillie,* is quaint, genial, and lovable. The background of the story is the rich, sweet, tranquil home life of the England of old, which seems to be undergoing a singular and melancholy change. The *Professor,* whose mind, for many years, has been devoted to science and scientific writing, has passed through the period of youth without its usual

experience, and now, having come to that maturity with which romance and sentiment are generally accounted inharmonious, he is suddenly overtaken and subdued by love. The object of his passion is a beautiful girl, who works for him, as a secretary, and the theory of the play is that, while he is aware of some mysterious personal derangement, he does not perceive the nature of his trouble, and does not know the cause. To present, in a state of serio-comic bewilderment, a middle-aged gentleman, refined, sweet, learned, eccentric, tender, and droll, and to show in what manner he ascertained the secret of his perturbation, and what result came of it, is the purpose of the drama,—a purpose, in Willard's management of its central character, that was brilliantly and humorously accomplished. It is not very likely that any man, however eccentric, could be in love without knowing it, and without knowing the object of his passion. Still, such a thing is, perhaps, not impossible. The philosopher Newton cut a large hole in his study door for the cat and a smaller one for the kitten, and the poet Bowles, when dressing for dinner, could not find his "other black silk stocking," because he had, inadvertently, put both stockings on one leg. Anything might happen to an absent-minded dreamer, whose thoughts are on everything except himself. And a refreshing idea it is,—and transcendently delightful to have it presented by an actor!—that there actually can be a man in existence to whom himself is not the

From a Photograph. *In the Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

EDWARD S. WILLARD
as
Cyrus Blenkarn, in "The Middleman."

first of all earthly considerations! Willard was especially happy in suggesting the complete unselfishness of the *Professor,* the gentle humility of his disposition, the docile candor of his mind, the density of his preoccupation, and that sweetly troubled perplexity of the intellect on which the fabric of character and scheme of action depend. Without the element of beautiful simplicity,—not of manner alone, but of feeling,—success would be impossible. With it the actor converted a whimsical theory into a lovely truth.

There are weak places in the play. Its representatives of British aristocracy are drawn with some of the exaggeration and injustice which, in the treatment of that subject, appear to be inseparable from the "liberal" mind. Weak-minded, petty, and futile persons, no doubt, exist in all ranks of society; but British ladies and gentlemen are not necessarily idiots because they happen to bear titles. Scorn of the titled classes can, in a work of theatrical art, be carried so far as to react upon the listener and seem spiteful. The matrimonial conspiracy against the *Professor* is more in the spirit of farce than of comedy. The attitude of the *Professor's* sister toward the lady of his love seems not reasonable. But all defects were overshadowed by the wealth of feeling and the incessant felicity of art with which Willard embodied the principal character. Not since Lester Wallack, in his best days, played *Sir Oswin Mortland* had a performance, of this quality,

been seen that was nearly as brilliant; while in homely grace and unconscious humor it approximated to the standard of such poetic creations as Irving's *Primrose* and Jefferson's *Rip Van Winkle.*

For the habitual observer of the acted drama it is an inexpressible relief and comfort to turn away from the dark portrayal of evil passions and from the wearisome analysis of moral obliquity, and to let the tired mind repose for a while on a spectacle of gracious and urbane character, sweet and gentle humanity, romantic sentiment, pure and tender feeling and serene rural life, —with its soft touches of color, its pleasing lights of eccentric humor, and its soothing environments of pensive meditation and deep and blissful peace. As the observer looked on Willard's embodiment of the *Professor,* and saw, at last, the happy lovers strolling away into the leafy lane, he seemed to stand in one of the dreamlike villages of pastoral England, to catch the scent of the hawthorn, and to hear the distant, mellow chimes, while the gloaming slowly darkened and the wind in the great elm trees whispered at once a blessing and a prayer. And when he came away from that performance his mind was ennobled, and there was nothing but kindness in his heart.

"THE FOOL'S REVENGE."

Willard added "The Fool's Revenge" to his repertory in 1905, and, for the first time in New York, he imper-

sonated the jester *Bertuccio,* at the Harlem Opera House, on November 16: on December 11 he repeated the performance at the New Amsterdam Theatre. His achievement was brilliant and his success decisive, and, since *Bertuccio* is a great part, in a potent drama that is fraught with spiritual admonition and inspiring influence, his revival of the old play was a theatrical event of uncommon import and value. Acting that only exhibits the actor, while it may possess a certain charm, is ephemeral and transitory. Acting that helps the auditor is alone vital and permanent—the one precious thing that survives when the fever of effort and the tumult of enterprise have died away. The play of "The Fool's Revenge," by an appalling picture of the consequences of sin, rebukes, in the human being, the wicked propensity to foster hatred and to usurp the Divine prerogative of retributive justice. The story,—drawn from Victor Hugo's great novel of "Le Roi s'Amuse," and known in the opera of "Rigoletto,"—possesses, in abundance, the main elements of tragedy, —pity and terror. The central figure is a deformed man, austere in mind but tender in feeling, who is embittered by the sense of his deformity, and is driven mad, by the torture of cruel injustice and affliction, only at last to survive, for a while, in a condition of hysteria, —wildly gleeful, yet agonized and forlorn,—that closely borders on lunacy. The character is, in some aspects, obnoxious, being freighted with hatred and malignity,

but it is redeemed by its vein of paternal tenderness and by a merciful sense of the bitter experience and wasting agony that are felt to have vitiated its original strain of virtue. "The Fool's Revenge" was written by Tom Taylor, for Samuel Phelps, and by him it was first produced, October 18, 1859, at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. It was first made known to the American public when, under the management of William Wheatley, Edwin Booth acted in it, as *Bertuccio,* at Niblo's Garden, March 28, 1864. Booth's performance of that part transcended anything of the kind which came before or after, and, probably, it will remain supreme, in its special domain, as long as the Theatre shall endure.

Bertuccio was a notary public, in the old Italian city of Ceséna, and there he dwelt in happiness, with an affectionate, idolized wife. To her he was all goodness and love. After a few years he was crazed by the forcible seizure and abduction of that wife by a dissolute noble, *Guido Malatesta,* and, for a time, became a maniac. Later, his reason being restored but not his mental balance, he became a *Court Jester,* in the service of a profligate, *Galeotto Manfredi,* Duke of Faenza, whom, after many weary years of waiting, he instigates to abduct and debauch the innocent wife of the miscreant by whom his own home had been despoiled. In that hellish work he personally assists, becoming, however,—through a series of well devised accidents,—instrumental in deliv-

ering to *Duke Manfredi* not *Ginevra,* wife of *Malatesta,* but his own cherished daughter *Fiordelisa,* who is thus by her father's hand subjected to peril of unspeakable outrage. He rescues her at last, but not before he has passed through horrible torment. The three acts of Taylor's play show the *Jester* maturing his scheme of revenge; living his dual life; now dissolving in tenderness over his loving, idolized daughter and over the memory of his lost wife; now raging in demoniac joy over the fancied consummation of his hideous reprisal, and, finally, in frantic pleading that he may enter the festal hall of the ravisher and save his child. Those are situations of marvellous potentiality, in their effect on the heart. Willard launched himself into them with tremendous vigor and dominated them with superb authority. In the version of the drama which he used there were some needless defects. The intimation that the *Jester* was not born a cripple but was made one by the brutal assault committed on him when *Malatesta* seized his wife weakens the pathos. In Edwin Booth's better version it is declared that *Bertuccio's* wife loved him the more because of his misery—because she saw him mocked and despised, lonely and poor. The character of *Bertuccio* is made more natural, and his experience is made more pathetic, when the warped mind is shown as partly a consequence of an embittering physical deformity. That presentation of the subject heightens the intellectual impartment in

this play. Physical deformity has seldom been endured with patience. It reacts on the mind that it encloses. It saddens or it embitters. A deformed man is usually reticent or secretive. He shrinks from contact or observation. He suspects, on every hand, pity, contempt, aversion, or ridicule. He is morbidly sensitive. He withdraws his life from the obvious, sunlit pathways of the world, and dwells in solitary, sequestered places; and there he nurses his emotions, whether of love or hate, till they acquire a fearful strength. If he be a man of deep heart and proud mind, and if his nature be illumined by the light of genius, he will develop an amazing individuality. Pope and Byron come out of literary history as examples of this truth. They, of course, are exponents of an exceptional class; but, as the same human nature runs through all classes, the same general results are apparent in all the victims of deformity. The deformed man is placed at a disadvantage, and that cruel fact shapes and colors his whole experience. That experience, accordingly, attracts the analytical student of life and stimulates the imaginative literary artist, by suggesting dramatic contrasts. Scott has delineated phases of it with great vigor of treatment and in a singularly beautiful atmosphere of romance in his novel of "The Black Dwarf." Other authors have touched upon it, with more or less success; but no great writer seems to have brooded over it as deeply as Victor Hugo did, for the purposes of art. To remind

the reader of *Quasimodo* is at once to illustrate this thought and to suggest a representative embodiment of this exceptional individuality. *Bertuccio* is, in some respects, a companion portrait, and certainly he is one of the most affecting images in all literature of the misery that laughs.

The reading, " I'll *walk* the night away," at the end of the agonizing scene of *Fiordelisa's* capture, is less effective than the reading, " I'll *laugh* the night away," which was used by Booth—though not so printed in his "Prompt Book." Willard used *"walk,"* and, nevertheless, stood still, striking an attitude and making a picture—instead of making a precipitate exit. Willard also read, at the end of Act First,

> "Put my enemy's heart into my hand,
> That I may *tear* it!"

Booth's reading was *"gnaw,"* instead of "tear," and the effect was far more terrible, combined with the awful image of insane ferocity that the great tragedian became at the moment. And in Booth's version the *Jester* is fatally stabbed when he leaps upon *Manfredi's* banquet board, and he dies in the arms of his rescued daughter—a much better ending than is shown in the version used by Willard. His impersonation of *Bertuccio,* however, qualifications aside, was one of splendid power. In the father's colloquy with his daughter,

when he tells her of his wrongs, Willard pathetically disclosed the depth of a great heart absorbed and constant in its beautiful devotion: and there his magnificent voice and his exquisite clarity of speech enormously emphasized the dramatic effect. In the night scene before the palace of *Malatesta,*—when *Bertuccio,* in joyous frenzy, horribly gloats over the supposed seizure of his enemy's wife,—the volume of his liberated passion was superb. And, finally, at the door of the *Duke's* banquet room, he made the essential transition from frantic despair to assumed merriment,—wildly pleading for admission to the feast,—with a surpassing effect of the terror and pathos that melt the heart. There the torrent of emotion, in movement not less than in words, was of vast volume and overwhelming force—only needing unbroken sustainment, the incessant tumult of burning and towering vitality, without limit or pause, to reach the supreme height of greatness. It was a personation of massive frame and proportion, fine detail, and beautiful symmetry, well worthy of a great actor, and it will long be remembered among distinctive achievements of its time.

TOM PINCH AND *THE CARDINAL.*

Charles Dickens, pre-eminent as a humorist, but often artificial in pathos, was true and fine in the portrayal of the character of *Tom Pinch,*—a lovable type of simplicity and gentleness. It is a representative rather

than a dramatic personality, impressing more by condition than action, but, even so, it is full of charm, and Willard entered into it with deep sympathy and invested it with the potency of a lovely temperament. *Tom Pinch* is quaint in aspect and whimiscal in manners, guileless in mind, serene and cheerful, blind to evil, prone to goodness, a man who craves nothing for himself but lives only for the happiness of others, and in his comic eccentricity he is deliciously droll. The play presented by Willard implicates only a few of the many characters in "Martin Chuzzlewit," and those merely as sketches, and it shows only an episode in that novel. The chief incidents of it are *Pinch's* reverie as to *Mary Graham,* whom he has seen in the church; his abject grief, on hearing of the wickedness of *Pecksniff,* whom he has idolized; his patient resignation, when exiled; his sweet cordiality when meeting his old friends; and his fierce apostrophe to *Pecksniff,* at the close of the chapter in his painful experience of blighted friendship and hopeless love. Willard subdued himself, with singular discretion, in the performance of *Pinch,* veiling his power, and acting in a mood of wistful sweetness and pensive sentiment, touched with the sober charm of homely grace. The embodiment was replete with fine strokes of delicate art, such, for example, as the cautious departure of *Pinch* from the presence of the lovers, *Mary Graham* and young *Martin Chuzzlewit,*— who, in their happiness, are utterly oblivious of him,—

and in his reverent humility, when kissing *Mary's* hand, after the final and formal betrothal. Denotements of that kind, in acting, show the depth of a man's nature and the fineness of his perceptions. There is more truth of revelation, as to the sacred passion of love, in one such play as "Tom Pinch" and one such performance as that given by Willard than in a whole theatre of *Mrs. Danes* and *Mrs. Tanquerays,*—the loose, patchouly-scented rabble of the social stews.

Louis N. Parker's romantic and poetic drama of "The Cardinal" is one of exceptional interest and dramatic power, and Willard's embodiment of its central character was a great creation of dramatic art, containing elements of moral grandeur and beauty almost unexampled in recent years of stage experience. In "The Cardinal" old expedients are used in a new way, and with admirable skill,—so that varying moments of suspense succeed each other with tumultuous rapidity, each situation growing stronger than its predecessor, and all things converging to a superb climax. The scene is laid in Rome, in the year 1510, under the pontifical reign of Julius II. (Julian della Rovere, 1441-1513), and the action turns upon *Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici's* knowledge, obtained at confession, of a murder, for which his own brother, an innocent man, convicted by circumstantial evidence, is condemned to suffer a felon's death.

The character of the *Cardinal,*—pure, intellectual,

noble, genial, sweet, animated by a lofty spiritual ambition, harboring the most magnificently opulent designs for the glory of the Church, and graced by ample and elegant scholarship and every virtue that can adorn either public station or private life,—is outlined with exquisite taste and skill and in a beautiful spirit. The story is developed by subjecting the *Cardinal* to a succession of trials, his efforts to save his innocent brother, —betrothed to the daughter of the man who has been foully murdered by a malignant rival,—being at every point defeated, till at last he is overwhelmed with absolute despair. In the final crisis, however, this great soul is suddenly inspired to circumvent the murderer by craft; he pretends to have been made insane by grief, and, having lured the miscreant to an interview, and arranged that the chief executive magistrate of Rome shall be an unseen witness of it, he artfully contrives that the assassin shall criminate himself by offering to own the truth, in exchange for the hand of the heroine in marriage. It is a magnificent dramatic situation, and Willard's acting sustained the whole passage upon the loftiest plane of simulative exposition. Two other great moments in this performance were those of the *Cardinal's* ecstasy of eloquence when dilating on his visions and designs as to the advancement of the Church and the subjugation of all Christendom, and his tremendous invocation of Divine vengeance upon the murderer. In the latter of these two speeches Willard

reached a height to which acting seldom attains. Grandeur of presence, fervor and splendor of moral passion, and glorious volume of melodious voice, combined with the tense repose of overwhelming emotion, made the outburst completely irresistible, and created a wonderful effect.

The presence of Edward Willard on our Stage was one of the best influences of the period in which he lived, and in his retirement, after years of honorable labor, the Theatre and Society have lost a puissant exemplar of moral and artistic beneficence. Willard's views of the Actor's Profession were sound and right. The plays that he presented were good and pure,—plays such as intellectual persons could enjoy and such as it is good that all classes of persons should see; plays that impressed the mind, touched the heart, and left a profound and chastening effect in the memory. He was a great actor, in the best sense of that much-abused term. His dominant attributes as an actor were intellectual concentration, dignity of aspect, intensity of demeanor, weight of personality, power and melody of voice, copious resonance of delivery, almost invariable executive precision, and the capacity of quick transition from quietude to trenchant, impetuous action. Those qualities, together with the advantages of fine stature and manly grace, were blended in him with the self-absorption and the physical strength essential to sustain an exacting character at a high tension of brilliant

life. Few actors have been seen whose personalities and artistic methods adapted themselves, as Willard's did, with equal congeniality to ideals of goodness or of evil. He was exceptionally fine in the elements of homely virtue, moral fervor, unconscious humor, and quaint whimsicality. His use of transparency in acting—the deliberate display to the vision of an auditory of emotions and motives that are veiled from the perception of dramatic interlocutors—was a transcendent felicity of art. His undeviating fidelity to that which is good, the judgment with which he reared a repertory of fine parts, the rich and various ability with which he presented them, his innate refinement and exquisite taste made him a splendid example to other actors, a light in the darkness, a beacon and a blessing in an often dreary theatrical time.

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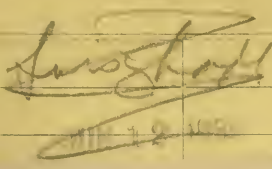
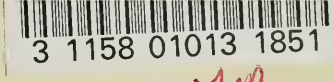
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